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PROGRESS OF THE ALLIES

In the Polish-Soviet dispute we have confronting us, in the middle of the war, a peculiarly difficult example of the sort of problem that we know is inescapable when the German war machine is smashed. If the problem is resolutely tackled now the chances for the post-war situation, as well as for the military victory, will be improved. The situation looks better than it did last week. There are two parts to the problem. The first is the impolitic behaviour of the Polish Government in this country. All that need be said about that is that the sooner the more extreme elements in it are purged the better; it has throughout been a misfortune that an exiled Government here should contain members who would be more at ease collaborating against the U.S.S.R., and it is high time that the Poles who are in authority should be induced to a realistic appreciation of the facts. The other half of the task is in Moscow, which may not wish to repudiate its treaty with Sikorski if satisfactory changes take place in the Polish Government here. If Moscow policy were as ill-advised as communist propaganda, the situation would indeed be gloomy; fortunately Stalin's latest statement dispels this fear. Some of the indiscriminate communist abuse of the Poles, who are an essential element in the United Nations, is clearly "diversionist." Nationalism and Catholicism, the two chief forces in Poland, are both powerful factors in the world situation; in the United States they count for even more than in Europe. It is important to remember that while in Britain even capitalists regard the U.S.S.R. as the country which has taken the weight of the German attack from these shores, in the U.S.A. many regard Soviet Russia mainly as an Ally which has so far not joined in the war against Japan. We note therefore with satisfaction that Moscow's attack is directed against the more extreme Poles rather than against Sikorski, and that Stalin has expressed unequivocal desire for good-neighbour relations (including an alliance if possible), with a post-war Poland strong enough to stand on its own feet. A precisely similar problem is likely to arise very shortly in relation to the Yugoslav Government and General Mihailovitch, whose leadership in Yugoslavia has proved as unreliable from the point of view of the United Nations as this journal has for many months declared it to be. Britain's job in both cases should be to discard these very dubious allies, to discuss realistically with Moscow the sort of governments we can both support in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe, emphasising (an aspect that may be rated too low in Moscow) that just as collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the West means the repudiation of Fascist allies by the Democracies, so it also involves Soviet respect and appreciation for the national, libertarian and religious traditions of the West.

Time and Tunisia

The one sovereign solvent for these frictions and obstacles to unity will clearly be a successful Allied landing or landings on the European coast of the Mediterranean. When can we look for such a development? Its fruition is bound to exercise an immense influence both on the attitude of the U.S.S.R. and on the actual course of operations on the Eastern Front, where the combatants—already locked in a struggle for the Kuban bridgehead—are everywhere manoeuvring for position and regrouping in preparation for the summer. Much depends on the time factor in Tunisia. It seems dangerous to follow sanguine military Press correspondents in jumping to the conclusion that von Arnim's evacuation of Mateur heralds an imminent end to operations in Africa. Certainly the enemy would not have withdrawn in this northern sector of his beleaguered bridgehead if his numbers had been equal to the task of holding the whole of his original perimeter; and his withdrawal, deliberate though it appears to have been, weakens to some extent his communications between Bizerta and Tunis. But Bizerta itself is a tough nut to crack and might be defended for a considerable period as an isolated enclave. Apart from the Bizerta garrison, with whose outlying defences the U.S. Corps should shortly be trying conclusions, von Arnim still has at his disposal an army substantial in numbers and apparently unbroken in fighting spirit. In time attrition of his supplies will assuredly be his undoing. But in terms of global strategy time in Tunisia is not on the Allies' side.

Uniting France

Laval brought up the rear of the Quisling pilgrimage to Germany, and returned with the order to mobilise the whole labour-force of France in service to the war against Bolshevism and the Anglo-American plutocracies. This measure, only just short of making the French people fight in the ranks of the German Army, has increased the pressure under which the French are uniting in resistance. The stream of escapes grows, a notable instance being the resignation, with two exceptions, of the Legation staff at Lisbon. The Tunisian offensive has again made Frenchmen feel that they are in the war. These facts are having their effect on the de Gaulle-Giraud negotiations. The Giraud note published a fortnight ago proposed a government of France consisting of a governing council for the war of governors and generals, a military régime for the territory liberated in France, and a constitution to be framed by delegates from the conservative Conseils-Généraux. The National Committee in Britain replied by stipulating for something much more like a peacetime régime, both in the immediate government of the colonial territories, and in liberated France—in the one case a Cabinet over the governors, in the other local elections as the country is freed. General Giraud has moved at last as far as a general armistice for political prisoners; he has dissolved the Légion des Combattants, the Vichy personal army, and promised the restoration of the trades unions. As he is personally surrounded by the most reactionary advisers, these measures are eloquent evidence of the trend of opinion in North Africa. Giraud is being gradually forced to the position desired by the Fighting French of a complete repudiation of the whole Vichy system. They rightly demand the end of the agents of Vichy in the government of Africa, and their strength is the fact that General de Gaulle symbolises liberation to the whole French nation. The resisters call themselves, simply, "Gaullistes"; when the French troops enter a freed African town they are greeted by cries of "*Vive de Gaulle*" —which is no doubt one of the reasons why de Gaulle's visit was postponed. It may also explain why Giraud objects to a meeting with de

Gaulle in Algiers: its population might give him an embarrassingly warm welcome. Men of the Right and the Left co-operate under the Gaullist sign. That does not mean that all is right within the Gaullist organisation; on the contrary, there are elements in it no more desirable than some that surround Giraud. But it does mean that the American and British Governments and Giraud's own organisation are increasingly compelled to recognise that liberation means the freedom of the common men and women of France and it means that there is more hope now of creating a leadership which promises a nearer approach to unity and therefore a better hope of democracy within France.

Hindus, Muslims and America

The Viceroy has now filled the vacancies in his Council caused by the resignations of several of its Hindu members during Mr. Gandhi's fast. The newcomers are not an impressive team, but the most significant fact about them is that the composition of the Council now realises Mr. Jinnah's ideal of parity in numbers between Muslims and Hindus. When once this precedent is established, it will be claimed by the minority community as a vested right. This seems a reckless innovation. Of recent events, however, the most important may well be the refusal of the Viceroy to allow Mr. Phillips, the American Envoy, to visit Mr. Gandhi in prison. His communication of this rebuff to American and Indian pressmen means, we take it, that he felt a disappointment, if not a resentment which his Government may share. It was an act of folly to deprive him of a chance that might have opened the door to reconciliation. It was even more unfortunate to risk the spread among Americans of the belief that reconciliation is not what we desire in India.

The Triumphs of Dilution

Sir Stafford Cripps's statement at the week-end that a number of the big aircraft factories are now running with no more than 2 per cent. of skilled workers in their complement is a fine indication of the point to which economy of skilled man-power has been carried in this country. It must not, of course, be taken to mean that complete aeroplanes can be built with this insignificant expenditure of skilled labour. The making of the engines and of many of the parts requires a much higher proportion of skilled workers; but even in the factories engaged on these types of work really remarkable progress has been made in reducing the proportion of all-round skilled mechanics by training new workers in more narrowly specialised kinds of skill and by upgrading less skilled workers, who can now set as well as operate their machines. Assembly of parts is the stage of production at which dilution of labour has gone farthest, on the model of what had been done before the war in the assembly of motor cars by Ford, Morris and Austin. The assembly-line is now as applicable to aeroplane as to automobile construction; but in the making of the parts it remains necessary to produce skilled workers rather than to dispense with them, because safety in the air depends on a high standard of quality in every essential part of a very complicated and delicate mechanism. In reality, the successes achieved in training new workers, including women, to perform highly skilled operations by concentrating on a narrow range of work are even greater than the statistically more spectacular feats accomplished in the big assembly plans. They are also much more important in pointing forward to what is likely to happen after the war. The relatively unskilled assemblers will be dispersed fairly evenly to all sorts of other jobs; but those who have been taught to do skilled work will not so readily renounce their skill when peace returns, if they can see jobs wanting to be done and not being done merely because it suits their employers better to contract output in the hope of larger profit.

Housing in Parliament (*by Our Parliamentary Correspondent*)

A lively debate on housing was opened by Lord Winterton following the Easter recess. Whilst the Common discussion covered many—but by no means all—of the important aspects of the question, the Lords, led by Addison and Beaverbrook, devoted themselves specifically to the question of the provision of cottages for agricultural workers. The return to London and other blitzed areas has seriously aggravated urban overcrowding problems and led to innumerable devices for evading rent control. Many inhabitable houses await major repairs; large numbers of 19th century mansions remain derelict and uninhabited through inability to convert them into flats. All over the country the high war-time marriage rate is daily increasing the shortage of houses produced by wartime cessation of building, even more than by enemy action. Hogg and Willink from the Tories, and Silkin and Marshall from Labour, joined in pressing such points on Ernest Brown, whose term of office at the Ministry of Health was widely felt to have been too long.

The Ministry was asked to use all available labour resources to meet present needs. The debate was much less satisfactory when it came to post-war problems. No discussion took place on the proposals now being mooted for handing over all control of housing to the Ministry of Works and Buildings, although there was much feeling that a long term programme was required for at least ten years. Nor was the land question in relation to rebuilding of blitzed areas and the construction of new towns properly discussed, although the need for plans to make available the necessary raw materials received some attention. The Ministry were urged, for example, to buy up timber from U.S.S.R. and Scandinavia ahead of need. Further debates on the whole post-war housing question will certainly be necessary.

Sir James Grigg is not very happy in answering questions or at dealing with adjournments. His obvious irritation with troublesome M.P.s would land him into difficulties, if not controlled. It is surprising how much more difficulty former Civil Servants appear to find in getting the atmosphere of the House than former businessmen and trade unionists. Lyttelton, Duncan and Bevin have all learnt how to handle Parliament. Anderson and Grigg make no progress.

THE UNITY OF EUROPE

WHAT emerged from the broadcast address which the Polish President, M. Raczkiewicz, gave to the world on Monday last? He spoke with restraint, but he stressed two objectives of Polish policy which are quite enough to account for the present tension. One of them was the demand for the restoration of the territory of the Republic in its integrity. The other was "the formation in the east-central European area of a strong union of free nations"—a phrase that too easily recalls M. Clémenceau's *cordon sanitaire* against Russia.

The territorial question is troublesome because the Poles won so much of the land they held in September, 1939, at the expense of their neighbours. They snatched their eastern provinces from Russia as the result of an unprovoked attack during the Civil War, while she was still the victim of Mr. Churchill's policy of intervention and the Allied blockade. They defied the League of Nations when they took Vilna from the Lithuanians by an illicit military raid. They grabbed part of Teschen from the Czechs by a stab in the back during the Munich period. Their title to East Galicia was vitiated by their failure to concede autonomy to its Ukrainian inhabitants. In all this disputed territory the Polish element is a minority, composed chiefly of landed gentry in the country and a small professional class in the towns. The once numerous Jewish minority, if any of it has survived the Nazi massacres, would be unlikely to welcome the restoration of Polish rule. The famous Curzon Line, drawn when the Foreign Office made no pretence of friendliness to Russia, pretty accurately represents the ethnographical boundary dividing the Russian populations from the Poles. What the Russians took back in 1939 did not go far beyond it. Seldom has a dispute raged over territory that presents so few temptations. Apart from the exhausted oil wells of Galicia, it contains no mineral wealth. Much of it is sparsely peopled. The soil is often sandy, and over vast reaches of it stretch the desolate Pripet marshes. In this region of marshes and forests the traveller has the impression that after long centuries of struggle, man can boast as yet only a precarious victory over Nature. Wide belts of forest constitute its only natural riches. Its peoples have never won an easy or abundant living from this borderland, and much toil would have to be spent on drainage and communications before it could expect a modest measure of prosperity. Even then its peasants could not thrive, if they had still to carry on their backs an idle landowning class.

Another grave issue is raised by the Polish President's project for the creation of "a strong union of free nations" on Russia's Western border. Even if the words had been better chosen, Moscow need not have a long memory to recall the plans for a buffer State and a *cordon sanitaire* with which the victors toyed at Versailles. Nature did not design Poland, which has no easily defensible frontiers, for this unenviable role of "buffer" between two vastly stronger peoples. Even if the Poles could persuade some of their neighbours to form "a strong union" with them, it would lack both the resources and the cohesion required for this part. Military strength in the modern world depends much more upon a country's industrial potential than upon its man-power. If the Poles could form the confederation of which they dream, stretching from the Baltic to the Aegean, it would still be much too weak to face the Soviet Union as an equal Power. But it is reasonably certain that neither the Czechs nor the Balkan Slavs would wish to join a "union" which the Russians had reason to view as a hostile coalition. It could be formed and it could survive only if London and Washington backed it with ample and reckless guarantees. That would be the ideal formula for World War No. 3.

An alternative solution has been put forward discreetly by the *Times* and bluntly by the *News Chronicle*, which has said that the Poles will have to recognise that Eastern Europe is Russia's "sphere of influence." We are not sure what is the precise meaning of this phrase, which comes from the very different context of the nineteenth century. It means presumably that Moscow will have the decisive voice in the post-war settlement of Eastern Europe, and it may mean no more than the obvious truth that no regime that is unfriendly to the U.S.S.R. will survive on her frontier. It may mean something more doubtful—that in future the governments of this border region will be mere satellites. This conception is now clearly repudiated by Stalin himself, for he has stated again his desire for a strong and independent Poland. Lenin had to discover to his surprise in 1920 that even

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workers and the impoverished peasants of Poland think on nationalist rather than class lines. The peasants are the most devout Catholics to be found in Europe. Polish civilisation is, moreover, so far individualist that even under the romantic militarist Pilsudski, the Republic never became wholly totalitarian, but retained some vestiges of civil liberty and a free press. It could not be subordinated to Russian policy and communist discipline without a painful struggle. We have hopes that when the Republic is restored, the peasants and Socialists will together be strong enough to create a genuine democracy, but the Russians have never cared to win the friendship of Polish Socialists. The formula of a Russian sphere of influence might work with less friction in the Balkans, since the Bulgarian and Serbian peasants feel for the great Slav brother people a friendliness which the Poles, crushed under Tsarist rule, never felt.

The formula also needs careful examination if we try to give it an economic meaning. The peasantry of Eastern Europe has been an integral part of an economic system which links them with the markets of Central and Western Europe. They need fertilisers, machinery, tractors, electricity, roads—in short, capital and organisation. They need, as urgently, help in developing suitable industries, for their population is in many regions too crowded to live by agriculture alone. The aim should be to plan the economic life of Europe, as far as may be, as a unit on a continental scale. East and West are complementary to each other. But it could not be argued that the Eastern Borderland falls in any exclusive way within the Russian economic sphere; and it may be some years before the Soviet Union possesses a surplus which it can spare to assist the development of this Eastern region. It may be that those who assign it to Russia as her sphere of influence are thinking only in political and not in economic terms. It is impossible to make such a distinction. A planned European economy requires common political organs. Co-operation between East and West is necessary both economically and politically.

This unhappy Russo-Polish quarrel may have its salutary effects if it compels us all to think out together, much more closely than we have yet done, our plans for the future European society. Neither the buffer State nor the exclusive sphere of influence is a helpful concept. Both belong to the game of power politics from which it should be our first concern to escape. Two major problems confront us. The first is the re-creation of a Germany fit to play an honourable part within the European family. The second is that the alliance between Britain and the U.S.S.R. should be a reality and not a formality. If Russia has to rely solely on the Red Army, while she dominates a broad belt of satellite States recognised as her sphere of influence, we shall not make an end of fear. We recall a proposal that may be forgotten by State Departments and Foreign Offices. Amongst various steps towards Stalin's "good neighbour" policy a real additional guarantee would be the restoration of a single Socialist International. If side by side with and in alliance with it, the peasant parties, which ought to play a greater part in the free Europe, of to-morrow could come together, the Soviet Union would have in their influence on public opinion a solid assurance of friendship. It could as a friend and mediator do more to improve Russo-Polish relations than any professional diplomat could even hope to do. It would be part of its natural duty to aid a German revolution and protect it, when it does begin to find its feet. In short, if an organised people's movement existed, as it once did before the Socialist-Communist feud rent it in two, it would be hopeful to dream of European unity. To the Labour Party should fall the initiative in restoring it.

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MR. LEWIS AND AMERICAN LABOUR

THE labour troubles in the United States are on the surface very much a matter of a personal vendetta of John Lewis against the President; but they really go a great deal deeper than that. The real root of the trouble is that it is impracticable to control wages in the name of preventing inflation unless, at the same time, both profits and prices are being effectively controlled—which, in fact, they are not. The very people in the United States who clamour loudest for wage stabilisation are those who most fiercely resist effective control over prices or drastic taxation of excess profits. Labour is therefore suspicious; and this gives Mr. Lewis just the handle he wants for making things awkward for his former colleagues in the C.I.O. They and the A.F. of L. leaders are doing their best to be "good boys" and to make allowance for the President's difficulties; but they cannot go beyond a certain point without risking the loss of confidence among their own members.

Thus the American coal strike, which came and went this week so swiftly that it is still uncertain to how much of the industry it ever extended at all, is part of the tangled process by which the United States is adjusting itself to the requirements of total war. Not only Mr. Lewis and his United Mine Workers, but the whole American Labour Movement, of every complexion, is thoroughly dissatisfied with the "Little Steel" formula by which the War Labour Board is tied down in deciding wage-claims that are referred to it. As far as the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. are concerned, the dissatisfaction does not imply the view that wages ought not to be pegged so as to reduce the danger of inflation. It implies rather that, if wages are to be pegged, other things must be effectively pegged as well, and neither the capitalist interests nor the Farm Block must be allowed to get away with concessions which will be bound to operate to the disadvantage of the workers.

Mr. Lewis appears to go farther than this, and to challenge absolutely the right of the President or the War Labour Board to regulate wages outside the practice of collective bargaining. He has again and again coupled his repudiation of the War Labour Board's jurisdiction with the assertion that "miners do not work without contracts"—that is, without collective settlements negotiated with their employers. Mr. Roosevelt countered this by taking over the mines, and thus making the United States Government the miners' employer; and Mr. Lewis, promptly seized on this, just before the President's broadcast, as a reason for calling the strike off and marching the men back to work, in order, he proclaimed, to allow time for new contracts to be negotiated with the men's new employer—the State. On this basis, Mr. Lewis has been reiterating his refusal to recognise the War Labour Board's right to intervene, even though the President strongly asserted its supremacy in the broadcast, of which he refrained from changing a word despite Mr. Lewis's action in calling off the strike. Moreover, according to Mr. Lewis, the strike has not been called off for good, but only for a fortnight, during which he hopes to negotiate a new agreement direct with the Government over the colliery owners' heads. As against this Mr. Early, the President's secretary, says categorically that Mr. Roosevelt's broadcast stands, and that there will be no settlement except on a basis which accepts the jurisdiction of the War Labour Board. And Mr. Ickes, the Fuel Administrator, denies that he has any intention of making a new contract. He declares that this is a matter for the owners and the miners, and suggests that the mines will be handed back to the owners as soon as uninterrupted production is assured—whatever that may mean.

All this sounds pretty ominous; but perhaps it is not really so ominous as it sounds. In the course of the negotiations which preceded the strike, the Administration is said to have proposed terms which did not technically violate the "Little Steel" formula, and were yet acceptable to the miners, but not to the owners. These terms were, broadly, that the miners, instead of receiving a rise in wage-rates, should accept a guarantee of continuous employment on the basis of a six-day week—which would in practice give them a pretty handsome advance in earnings, albeit linked up with harder work. This is the solution Mr. Ickes has now put temporarily into effect, but it does not amount to a new contract in Mr. Lewis's sense. Presumably, Mr. Lewis looks to the Administration, now that it has become the employer, to write these terms into a new contract; and presumably the President's condition can be satisfied if, when the terms have been agreed upon, they are ratified by the War Labour Board, as they can be, without violating any formula by which the Board is bound. This seems to be the obvious way out of the difficulty; but there will be many people in the United States who will see in it something much too like a victory for Mr. Lewis, and will do their best to upset it if they get a chance. For example, there are cries in some quarters for rush legislation making all wartime strikes illegal, and handing complete power over wages to the War Labour Board. There is also intense hostility among the colliery owners and in other capitalist quarters to the President's action in taking over the mines; and the demand is being made that they be handed back to the owners, not after the war, but at once.

Many people in this country entirely misunderstood the character of the President's threat to send the United States Army to occupy the mines. They thought this was directed against the strikers; but actually it would work just the other way. Armed forces maintained by the colliery owners and State militia, effectively under the owners' control, the Trade Unionists do regard as their enemies: the Federal Army they are much more disposed to regard as their protector against the armed violence of American Big Business. The President's action in taking over the mines and his proposal to send in the Federal Army were both moves popular with labour, and very unpopular with capitalist opinion. They created a favourable atmosphere for a settlement with Mr. Lewis's miners, if not with Mr. Lewis himself. But, even if the mines trouble is finally settled, that will not be the end of the deep-rooted problem which underlies it. If there is to be a standstill at the expense of Labour, means must be found and enforced, as on the whole they have been in Britain, of really confiscating excess profits, of really checking excessive prices, and of making public opinion really believe that *no* great vested interest is being allowed to use its power to blackmail the nation. The Americans are still a very long way from all these things; and, with most of the vested interests more active than ever in pushing their sectional claims in Congress, it is not surprising that Mr. Lewis can find followers when he constitutes himself the uncrupulous champion of the Labour interest, or that the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., which are doing their best not to embarrass the Administration, find difficulty in persuading their own followers that they are not being let down. A firm hand is needed over the whole American economy as it moves into a condition of total war; but it is easy to appreciate the President's difficulty in applying that firm hand while Congress is still playing the old lobbying game and is moreover "gunning" for him personally whenever it sees a chance.

To members of the Forces

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A LONDON DIARY

In the last war they used to say in Cambridge that the students in residence were "Crocks, Cranks, Blacks or Yanks." The Cambridge of to-day presents a very different picture. The Yanks are there in great numbers, as I noticed wandering through familiar streets last week, but they are in uniform. The cranks (which, I suppose, meant conscientious objectors) are mainly doing land work or forestry (though some are in gaol, as they were last time). In or out of uniform there are still young men who are given six months in which to feed their minds. Some study philosophy and poetry or music. They have at least this short space in which to discover something of the heritage in defence of which they are so likely to die. For this is the least bearable part of war. The older and less valuable part of society is not, it is true, as safe as it was in the last war; the middle-aged who have been through the Blitz can hold up their heads without talking so much tosh about "giving their sons." Yet it is still true, and more true to-day than ever before, that war slays the young and the fit and saves the old and the ill. In this stage of the war the spectacle is really monstrous. We choose out the very young men; we train them to the highest degree of skill and efficiency, we send them out in aeroplanes time after time until in one raid or another they die. But the policy of six months of mental and spiritual opportunity is good. Those who survive will have had at least a glimpse of what life should be like for the young and they will not, after the war, believe that force is everything. And it means that those who do die, will not have died without having lived.

* * *

This was brought home to me with peculiar poignancy by the discovery that Patrick Trench is missing from a recent raid. I last saw him a few months ago when he was already far advanced towards the forty raids over Germany which are the maximum which any bomber-pilot has to achieve. I wanted to get to know Patrick Trench better. He was melancholy and without any of the common illusions. He was interested mainly in poetry and ideas. He was not sufficiently satisfied with any of his own verse to have it published. He hated war as much as I do, and in particular loathed bombing which destroys indiscriminately the ugly and the beautiful, the innocent and the guilty. Yet he was one of the best pilots England has had. The night I saw him he was expecting in a few hours to be bombing Germany again. He sat and talked of that as a disagreeable commonplace. In between the raids he lived the life of a student at Cambridge, reading and talking philosophy and trying to understand what the world was about. He planned to go to China when he had finished his fortieth raid.

* * *

Cambridge to-day is doing its real job as a centre of thought and culture. With the help of C.E.M.A. there is a constant succession of notable concerts; nowhere is there more evidence of that musical renaissance which has been one of the least expected features of the war. In the Arts Theatre on May 30th there is to be a somewhat novel form of concert, in which music and poetry bear an equal share. Peggy Ashcroft is reading poetry and Natasha Litvin giving a piano recital. Or again, if it is the visual arts you want, there is a series of excellent first-class exhibitions of painting or photography. Or you may see in the Fitzwilliam Museum a remarkable collection of English pictures lent by Lord Rothschild. Most interesting of all are the dramatic productions of the repertory plan at the Arts Theatre. They have presented several plays of Chehov. Next week they are acting Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, to be followed by Schnitzler's *Lieberlei* and Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine*. All these artistic events are open to members of the Forces on special terms, and if they go in parties, there are still further reductions. I keep wondering why it is that we have to wait for a war to awake to the possibility of making the world of culture available to others than the chosen few. If you want information about any of the many activities at the Arts Theatre, apply direct to the manager.

* * *

The Scottish branch of the British Legion have written a demand for reform of the war pensions system. This is certainly an occasion for an instalment of social security now—and it is one which would go through Parliament without, I conceive, a dissentient voice. Two recent cases have come below my notice. The first was the Colonel's Lady; her husband, a regular officer of twenty years' standing, fell dead at his work. The post-mortem revealed coronary thrombosis. He had not been killed on active service; therefore his wife had no claim to any pension. Now why this fantastic regulation, dating apparently from the Crimean War—or is it from Waterloo? The man died in the service of his country just as much as if a Messerschmitt had swooped down and machine-gunned him. And what becomes of the reasoning that army pay is low, because it is charged with deferred pensions? This woman who had strings to pull, was finally awarded a very modest "compassionate grant" Judy O'Grady had no influence, her husband got nothing. I heard the local residents discussing their case in an inn sitting-room. O'Grady was called up, served for a year, turned out with tuberculosis. This, according to the Medical Board, must have been contracted before his service; he was denied a pension. And what, demanded his neighbours, was the doctor doing who passed him fit when he was called up? Is not the War Office responsible for the mistakes of its officers? And what of the inevitable aggravation of phthisis by the exertions of army life? He might just as well, said the inn-keeper, amid general consent, have had both his legs taken off by a bomb—better, in point of earning capacity. These are ordinary cases, such as happen all the time. The suffering, resentment and humiliation caused by such injustice is the very stuff of revolution, and it is a matter in which the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skins.

* * *

Max Beer, who died on Monday in London, was the author of the standard *History of British Socialism*, a work remarkable for insight as well as industry. He was also one of the most learned writers about every phase and aspect of international Socialism and working-class organisation. For many years he was the London correspondent of the Berlin *Vorwaerts*; and in spite of his strong British sympathies, well known to a host of friends, he was interned here for a time during the last war. After the Peace Conference he found himself, much to his dismay, transformed into a Pole—because he had been born in German Poland. He returned, however, to Germany, and played his part in the struggles of the Weimar Republic—tending leftwards and feeling always strong sympathies for the Soviet Union. When the Nazis came to power, he profited by the luck of having the same name as a favoured Nazi songwriter to get safely to England. His autobiography, *Fifty Years of International Socialism*, was a very charming and modest book. It was to Max Beer that his friend Lenin, whom he met in the British Museum some time before the last war, expressed the intention of so arranging the Russian Revolution, when it came, as to skip the Liberal-Capitalist phase. In appearance, Max Beer was like a newspaper caricature of a German scholar—short-sighted, peering, chesty, and immensely earnest. When you got to know him, you found him charming. He had many friends in England who will mourn his going.

* * *

Who wrote the following?

It's all the fault of the human brain being made in two lobes, only one of which does any thinking. . . . As it is, those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war.

Answer:

Winston Churchill. *A Roving Commission*, p. 331.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to A. C. Gimson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Criticism of the transfer of Scots girls to England on war work, came from Mr. Alexander Sloan, M.P. for South Ayrshire. "Is there very much difference between the forced transfer of labour from Scotland to England and that from France or Poland to Germany?" he asked.—Report of T.U.C. meeting in *The Scotsman*.

For sale, freehold, 6 3-roomed condemned cottages bringing in £6 18s. per month rent, £600 for quick sale.—Advert. in *The Lady*.

Books on Health, Nature Cure, Mental Efficiency, Psychology, Sport, Fitness, Yoga, Prediction, Occultism, Astrology, Psychism, Religion. Books by Mr. Winston Churchill and Prof. Joad. Books for young people, etc., etc. Send addressed envelope *stating subjects preferred*.—Advt. in *Tribune*.

Young mother, able to illumine drab routine of organisation or production with flashes of constructive thought, seeks post in Sheffield.—Advert. in *New Statesman and Nation*.

"We don't want every tree cut down and make it look like a barracks," said Mr. T. Bonell, at Alvaston Parish Council meeting last night, after a letter had been read from a resident complaining of damage to his roof by branches from a tree on Fishponds Lane corner.

"The man must get another house," he added.—*Derby Evening Telegraph*.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The rumour of victory grows, sunrise over Africa glows
And the hard-fought campaign nears its close as they storm the last fortified height;
Back and forward the battle has swayed, by surprises and setbacks delayed
But progress was steadily made and the end is already in sight.

They have fought in the dust and the heat, they have sparred with no thought of retreat,
They appeared on the verge of defeat but hung on with their fury unspent,
And their cries since the combat began have been heard from Beersheba to Dan,
In Damascus Dakar, Kairouan, and afar in the Bedouin's tent.

They have skirted the barriers and traps, they have stood at the breaches and gaps,
Till they seemed on the point of collapse, fighting on in the noise and the blast,
Encircled, they never fell back, but replied with a counter-attack.
They have stood at the bulge and the crack, at the dent and the tip they held fast;
They advanced where approaches were mined they have captured the foothills to find
Greater obstacles looming behind, but they're near a decision at last.

The fight has been long and severe and some elements fell to the rear,
But the end of the conflict draws near, and on side to the other must bow.
The battle has raged to and fro, and the rate of advance has been slow—
But Generals de Gaulle and Giraud should be shaking hands any time now.

SAGITTARIUS

THE PROBLEM

[This is the first of two articles in which Mr. Robert Boothby, M.P., sets out an economic policy which he believes should be acceptable to a "National Government" of the future.]

"I well remember coming back from France in 1919. This country was richer and had a higher prestige than ever before in its history. We had the greatest Navy, the greatest Air Force, and the finest Army in the world. We had the land of England better cultivated than it had been for two generations. We had more skilled mechanics, more skilled shipbuilders in the country, with magnificent new factories and machinery. The whole world was clamouring for our goods, and primary producers throughout the world had good incomes because prices were satisfactory, and they could pay for our goods, and were demanding our goods. Our position was one of immense wealth, but financial theory said "You are poor"; and for twenty bitter heart-breaking years we laboured to make the actual facts fit financial theory. Prices of primary producers throughout the world were forced down by our financial policy of deflation, we ruined the farmers of the world and the farmers of our own country. We destroyed shipbuilding yards, pulled down factories, scrapped machinery, forced our skilled mechanics and artisans to migrate to America and the Dominions; we made the soil of England go out of cultivation and become more derelict than it had been for hundreds of years. And at the end of twenty such years of bitter and hard work, we had made the actual facts fit the financial theory, and we were poor indeed, and unable to keep up adequate armaments, and our prestige sank almost as low as it had ever been."

THESE are the words of Mr. Loftus, the Conservative M.P. for Lowestoft, in a striking speech in the House of Commons shortly after the outbreak of the present war. The purpose of the present article is to inquire how we may best avoid a repetition of this preposterous and intolerable tragedy. Twenty years ago a policy of artificial restriction succeeded the era of automatic expansion. In a desperate effort to maintain profits, private enterprise ceased to be free, and became self-regulated through monopolies, trade associations, and price agreements. The policy of restriction extended to the trade unions, and led not only to a vast reduction in the production of real wealth, but to the deliberate physical destruction of raw commodities. Not scarcity, but glut, became the bogy. And by 1930 the entire fabric of *laissez-faire* capitalism had crumbled away. From the moment the profit-motive took the form of restriction instead of expansion, the system was doomed.

For all this the bankers were greatly responsible. In order to maintain the exchange value of their money they plunged the whole world into the miseries of depression and unemployment, denied a subsistence payment to those who (by their will) were out of work, denied a subsistence living to primary producers everywhere, allowed wheat, cotton, coffee and cocoa to be burnt up rather than "sell at a loss"—while millions of people suffered from want, and often from starvation, in idleness. To every outworn economic shibboleth of the nineteenth century, including the conception of strictly balanced annual national "budgets," they stuck like glue. They produced poverty in the midst of plenty on a scale never hitherto experienced, or even approached. Finally—with the aid of six million German unemployed—they produced Hitler. Both they and the system to which they clung stand condemned.

To those who still doubt the possibility of avoiding a repetition of this grim business, I simply point to the fact that our economic problem has been temporarily solved by the war. The devotion of 70 per cent. of our productive resources to purposes of destruction has actually raised (in some respects) the general standard of living. Why is this? Because these productive resources are being devoted to *something*, instead of being allowed to rot and waste; because the remainder (not devoted to war purposes) are being used rationally and uninterruptedly; and because adequate supplies of credit are at last available. The conclusion to be drawn is that once the State is in a position to determine (1) the aggregate amount of resources to be devoted to augment the instruments of production, and (2) the basic rate of reward to those who own them, it has accomplished its main economic task.

That we are financing the war, as to fifty per cent. by borrowing, is not denied. But what does that amount to? Taken as a whole, the taxpayers are the same people as the lenders and receivers of interest. The aggregate wealth of the country is reduced only by the destruction involved in waging war. In so far as capital equipment has been extended and improved, it has been increased. Thus the outworn "Treasury view" that the amount of bank money (i.e., credit) available at a given moment is fixed, like so much jam in a jampot, has been completely exploded. The only limits to the expansion of real wealth are man-power and materials. And the problem of unemployment can be solved by the wise control of credit and by regulated capital expenditure on the part of the State.

In time of peace the State will have another formidable weapon for maintaining full employment and production—the redistribution of wealth by means of taxation, and measures of social reform such as the Beveridge Plan. The object here must be to combine a maximum flow of investment with a maximum propensity to consume. In other words, to increase purchasing power without destroying the profit motive.

Mr. Churchill was quite right when he said in his broadcast that, in order to maintain the marginal efficiency of capital (a reasonable expectation of profit) the standard rate of income-tax would have to be substantially reduced after the war. A sharper distinction will also have to be drawn between earned and unearned incomes, at the higher levels. But the most important, and indeed, essential reform in the field of national finance, is the separation of capital from current expenditure. Under the present system of single budgets, balanced annually, taxation is imposed at a higher rate in times of depression, at a lower rate in times of prosperity. The procedure, as the Lever pamphlet recognises, should be precisely the reverse. There must, in the future, be two Budgets—a "capital budget" and a "current budget." The latter, which would include all running expenditures, should be covered out of ordinary revenue; the former out of the taxation of capital (e.g. death duties) and the floating of loans against capital assets. The power to advance or retard the rate of expenditure in the capital budget gives to the State an additional weapon of immense and perhaps decisive importance with which to counter inflationary or deflationary movements, and thus control the trade cycle.

The sole argument which has been advanced against the Beveridge Plan, and other measures of social advance such as improved housing and education, is that we cannot afford it. The case which I have attempted to make, if accepted, disposes of this argument so far as home production and consumption is concerned. But, given the assumptions of *laissez-faire* capitalism, it remains true with regard to the export trade. So long as trade is carried on on the basis of uncontrolled international competition, the country with the lowest standard of living must, in the long run, win. Fortunately we shall never again be faced with the horrible alternative of reducing wages and forcing down our standard of life or starving. For the unregulated international competitive system is stone dead, and can never be revived. A world-wide flux of frontiers, economic systems, social systems, ideas, philosophies and faiths will confront us after this war; but *laissez-faire* capitalism and free trade will not be amongst them. That hoary old shibboleth "the removal of trade barriers" can therefore be thrown, without a qualm, into the dustbin in which it should have been deposited many years ago.

That foreign trade will be conducted largely by the method of barter, in the opening post-war phase, admits of no doubt. That it can subsequently be greatly expanded by the careful planning of multilateral trade on a world-wide scale is equally certain. In neither case will the cost factor be decisive. Not costs, but the purchasing power of our people is now the determining factor in our trade. We cannot produce beyond it. We cannot import beyond it. It is the regulator of our national industry and commerce. But see what bargaining power we possess! The British market is one of the most valuable in the world. It is absolutely essential to all countries which are exporters of raw materials.

Presumably we shall not betray British agriculture after this war, as we did after the last. But we shall still need to import considerable quantities of food and raw materials. Let us say to those countries which are at least as anxious to export food and raw materials to us as we are to export finished goods to them: "Very well. We will buy so much from you, on condition that you buy so much from us." The terms of the aggregate trade can then be settled by direct negotiations, in which the new technique of medium-term credits will have an important part to play. This involves a permanent control over imports, and a partial control over exports—the antithesis of free trade under the old conditions of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Why not? Export control boards for agricultural products already exist in the Dominions. They must be balanced by import control boards here. Tariffs are no longer any use. In the modern world exports and imports of raw commodities have to be regulated quantitatively, and prices fixed by agreement. You have already done it with wheat. The policy will have to be extended so as to cover at least oats, beef and mutton. And it does not end here. I hope that after the war some form of international control will be established over the basic necessities of humanity, with a view to regulating their production, price and distribution all over the world. Amongst these I would include wheat, oil, coal, steel, and certain of the metals. This is a job for the Supreme Economic Council which must surely be set up. It postulates a considerable measure of international agreement. Should that not be forthcoming, there is no reason why the matter should not be settled on an Imperial basis, without in any way reducing the standard of life in this country.

If the Tory party refuses to retain control over the export of capital and the import of goods, it will be false to all its traditions; and it will forfeit the basis of its political power, because it will lose—once and for all—the confidence and support of the agricultural community.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the problem of exports is international rather than domestic in character. But there is one very real danger, which has to be guarded against. It is by no means inconceivable that certain financial interests in the United States may try to tie up this country in a hard-and-fast agreement, with the object of restoring as much of the pre-war system of *laissez-faire* capitalism as possible, and of exploiting—with us in the capacity of junior partner—the rest of the markets of the world. Such an attempt is already foreshadowed in the *Time-Life-Fortune* proposals, and to a lesser extent, in the Morgenthau currency plan. Not only would this gravely fetter our freedom of action, but in the long run it would be fatal alike to the cause of Anglo-American relations and of world prosperity and peace. For our very lives' sake we cannot go back to an unregulated gold standard. We must, at all costs, retain the right to expand or contract credit, to initiate economic activity either by public works or direct investment through the medium of private firms, and to inaugurate schemes of social reform, as we desire. And this involves unfettered control over the export of money from this country. Moreover, our economic relationship with the Soviet Union and with China is no less important to us than that with the United States. It should be our constant aim to secure the maximum economic co-operation, along the lines which have been indicated, between all four of the great federations which form the basis of the United Nations; and to act, in so far as it may be necessary, as a bridge between East and West.

Finally, it should always be borne in mind that there is no rigid distinction to be drawn between exporting industries and the rest. Britain should be regarded, and treated, as a national workshop. No industry is self-contained, and no industry should suffer simply by reason of the fact that it manufactures primarily for export. Each is a department of the national workshop. And it is the productive capacity of the nation as a whole that will ultimately determine the standard of living of our people. ROBERT BOOTHBY

WAITING FOR BEVERIDGE

[Saratar's former articles describing his experiences in the catering industry appeared in this journal on April 3rd and 10th.]

MISFORTUNE soon interrupted my career with the Three Merry Bakers. In the course of employment I contracted an industrial malady known as bakers' dermatitis, which spread like fire over my limbs and rapidly rendered me totally unfit for further manual work. But my adventures as a member of the working class did not end here. From now on, although sometimes disagreeable, they were highly instructive.

My first step was to report to the casualty ward of St. X's Hospital. Within 20 minutes, I had been carefully examined by the doctor on duty, who prescribed temporary treatment and told me to call and see the honorary dermatologist next morning. This I did. After waiting for one hour and fifty minutes with other patients, I was again thoroughly examined, told I might continue at my employment, and given new prescriptions, with instructions to call again in a fortnight. Before queuing at the dispensary, I had to pass a humiliating quarter of an hour with a young lady almoner, who insisted on probing into my private circumstances, although, in the hope of avoiding this embarrassment, I had offered at the outset to pay whatever fee she, or custom, might determine. The ointment supplied to me by the dispenser was a crude tar preparation, ruinous to clothing. As I could not afford bandages for both arms, legs and hips, I was unable to use it. Consequently I decided to visit St. Y's Hospital. Here I waited in a crowd for three and three-quarter hours before seeing a doctor. Most of this time I sat on some stairs, as there was a shortage of chairs; many other people had to stand. The lady almoner of this hospital was experienced and tactful, but even so my dealings with her would have been less trying if there had been a set fee for those able to pay. Following the doctor's examination, I was registered for acceptance as an in-patient as soon as a bed became available at the hospital's country annexe. In the interval, I was to report for treatment once a fortnight. The final cure would occupy from six to twelve weeks.

My condition grew worse, so after a few days I consulted a local private practitioner, in the hope that he might be able to expedite my reception in hospital. By this time I was practically unable to sleep, except at intervals of four days or so, when I slept the clock round; and I could not walk more than a few hundred yards without great fatigue and painful swelling of ankles and knees. He gave me a personal note to Dr. A., at the Z Hospital, recommended me as an in-patient, and drew attention to strong evidence suggesting a possible diabetic condition, in addition to the skin trouble. Through a misunderstanding, I arrived late at the hospital, but Dr. A. consented to see me. He read my doctor's letter, but did not refer to the question of treatment as an in-patient, made a cursory examination of the skin condition (this only at my request), and paid no attention to the query from my private doctor regarding possible diabetes. He prescribed medicine and a lotion for external use, and told me to report again in a fortnight. The lady almoner of this hospital, a person of rare sensibility, showed me every possible consideration, and in fact refused my offer of a fee similar to those I had previously paid elsewhere.

My experiences convince me that there is great room for improvement in the official attitude of voluntary hospitals towards working-class patients. It would seem that much humiliation could be avoided, as well as needless inconvenience, due to long waiting. My private doctor afterwards informed me that humiliation in monetary and other matters is often deliberately applied in order to drive patients to consult doctors in their private capacity, to the latter's pecuniary benefit. Whether this is so or not, I do not envy those who have to attend hospital for long periods as poor patients. I have seen doctors use towards such persons a manner which they would not dare to employ with private patients; and this is indefensible.

A few days after ceasing work, I was told by my employers to attend for examination by a Certifying Surgeon under the Factory and Workshop Act. This gentleman gave me a certificate of disablement which entitled me to apply for compensation at 35s. a week under the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1925. I did so, but was informed that no compensation would be paid until I had seen the insurance company's doctor. Here the fun began in earnest. Let me explain at this point that my employment had been of too short a duration to entitle me to benefit under the National Health Insurance Act. I was not a member of a Friendly Society. Consequently, my only potential source of income was from Workmen's Compensation. I was suffering from a most troublesome disease caused directly by my work. It is so common in the baking industry that my employers provided in the kitchen's First Aid chest a special prophylactic ointment and bandages for staff use. (I was not informed of this until after the disease had gained its hold.) Thus I was incapacitated for any but the lightest sedentary work, and was unable even to write, as my hands were almost raw. I needed prolonged rest and a vast supply of bandages, neither of which I could afford.

Eighteen days after ceasing work, I presented myself by appointment at the office of the insurance company's doctor, arriving at precisely the time previously notified to me in writing. It was a bitter morning. I was kept waiting in a cold, draughty room for over two hours before the doctor saw me. I replied fully to his many questions, and reminded him that not only had the Certifying Surgeon diagnosed my complaint as being unquestionably of industrial origin, but this opinion was confirmed by the chief specialist of St. Y's Hospital, who considered that it would take several weeks' treatment as an in-patient to cure me. He remarked, somewhat ruefully, that I gave my evidence like an expert, and then told me to interview a lay official of the company. A quarter of an hour later this person informed me that the doctor I had just seen disputed my claim, on the ground that I had suffered from eczema several years previously. I protested, and retold the entire story, but it was useless. The company, he said, denied liability, and would pay no compensation unless my claim were allowed by a Medical Referee, who would in due course be appointed by the Court. I pointed out that for three and a half weeks I had been without income of any sort. He replied that all he could pay me was 8d., the cost of my return fare to his office, and recommended me to apply for relief to the Public Assistance authority. Finally, he informed me, with some show of regret, that it was perhaps a pity that I had not broken my leg, instead of getting dermatitis. In that event, he remarked consolingly, his company would not have hesitated to pay the 35s. a week.

Some days later, I was instructed to visit the Medical Referee. He received me most courteously, exactly at the appointed time; and I noticed that other workmen had separate times, so that no one was kept waiting unnecessarily. It seemed too good to be true. After examining me and hearing my story, as if I were a private patient, he said he regarded the insurance doctor's attempt to dispute my claim as preposterous. From a variety of sources I have learnt that it is the practice of many insurance companies to act systematically to avoid their obligations under the Workmen's Compensation Act. No technical loophole is too mean for them, and their doctors are instructed to act accordingly. In consequence fair-minded doctors tend to strain discretion in order to find in favour of the workman. In my case there was no problem; my doctor had no a shadow of doubt. Afterwards, he counselled me spontaneously to go into hospital at once, in order to avoid possible serious complications. He explained the reasons for delay. He asked if I could afford a fee of three guineas, in which case he recommended me to consult Dr. A. as a private patient: the latter would, he assured me, place a bed at my disposal in the Z Hospital without loss of time. I did not inform him that I had already seen Dr. A., although not as a three-guinea patient.

I received my first payment under the Workmen's Compensation Act three weeks and six days after I had to cease work. I was fortunate in my friends during this period. But how does a workman, whose family or friends cannot or will not assist him, cope with such a situation? And why should he be compelled to burden private persons, anyway? There is not room in this article to set down every detail of this strange experience. The facts recorded have happened exactly as stated. This much is indisputable: so far as insurance companies and medical institutions are concerned, there is one law for the rich, and a very different law for the poor. I have seen enough to know that the latter are at times treated with deliberate discourtesy in order to dispose of them by humiliation.

Only my interest as an investigator enabled me to support the more degrading features of this experience. But for this, had I been entirely without friends or money, I would rather have starved, or returned to work until I could work no more, than put up with some of the treatment I received. And, even with the mental armour of an investigator, I confess that in the end I was unable to bring myself to face the ordeal of examination by the Public Assistance authority. I do not deny that I ought to have gone through with this also, but when the time arrived I had already had more than enough from my superiors.

I do not know Sir William Beveridge, but have long held his name in high esteem. Let me assure him that there must be hundreds of thousands of persons similarly unknown to him who think of him in terms of real affection.

SARATAR

BEATRICE WEBB

BERNARD SHAW might well have had Beatrice Webb in mind when he drew his picture of Lavinia, the patrician turned Christian (Communist we say in this century) in *Androcles and the Lion*. When a young officer insults her she knocks him flat by telling him to pull himself together, hold his chin up and behave properly. How were soldiers "to respect and obey patricians if they saw them behaving like street boys?" That was just Beatrice Webb's attitude to members of the British ruling class. She was herself a very conscious member of the ruling class and she was outraged by its mental and moral sloppiness, its inefficiency and irresponsibility. Socialism she saw as the application of science and public spirit to social organisation. Capitalism is the survival of an emotional and selfish attitude in matters which are inevitably in their effects public, and which should be efficiently organised as public services. A society founded on private enterprise is anarchy, and to take more out of society than you put into it is quite literally theft. The job of the intelligent and self-respecting is to build an efficient, incorruptible and non-acquisitive society; to do so they must be blameless in their private lives as well as realistic in their tactics. Therefore the Webbs set out to analyse society, divide the population into categories, and so marshal and publicise the facts

and the policy arising from it that the weight of argument and opinion would eventually defeat the vested interests in anarchy.

As the years went by, the Webbs—I think Mrs. Webb especially—ceased to believe that the job could be done by the Labour Party; she was in a good position to judge, having spent many years trying to imbue it with her own high standards of conduct and, above all, to instil into it the confidence which she herself instinctively possessed. She decided that Lenin had been right in believing that the instrument of change must be a disciplined, puritanical and devoted body, such as the Jesuits were in the days of Loyola, and such as the Communists were in the days of Lenin. She never for a moment forgot that the task of change was a transference of power, but neither did she ever really contemplate that the power might be in the hands of any but responsible and disciplined people with habits of authority. She was never the type of Socialist who welcomes failure on the part of the present ruling class. She was disgusted at its misbehaviour and looked to its Socialist successor to be better.

I remember her patrician scorn of a well-known contemporary woman who, she considered, degraded her name by selling it for advertising purposes. I cannot forbear to repeat the conversation that followed; it is so perfectly characteristic of all those present. She was riding so high on her moral horse that Maynard Keynes said, gently leg-pulling, "But surely you are too severe? We should all give our names for money if only we were offered enough. You would do it yourself for a million pounds." Before Mrs. Webb could utter an indignant denial, Sidney Webb, always on the earth and quick to see the commonsense reply, said, "Oh, yes, of course we should, if we were offered a million pounds, my dear. But we should do the advertisement in our own way so that we should not be ashamed of it." "You mean," said Keynes, "that you would say, 'this is the best cigarette you can hope to get until the industry is nationalised.'"

The Webb partnership is a triumphant illustration of the truth that two people who work in agreement may really do the work you may expect from ten. The contrast between Mr. and Mrs. Webb has always fascinated me. Sidney is really the man of pure reason. He once told me he had never had a headache, never a physical or spiritual indigestion. His mind is stored with accurate and valuable information, neatly arranged and strung together on a single strong thread. He is infinitely benevolent, infinitely generous, scarcely ever cross and, like Bentham, so fertile that all the world has stolen from him and left him rich. Mrs. Webb, on the other hand, was full of complexities. For years, it seemed to me, the subject that most deeply interested her was religion—an interest which Sidney regarded as one of the eccentricities of the human mind, to be docketed into its appropriate pigeon-hole, along with art and music. But Mrs. Webb had her conflicts; she slept badly and during the small hours wrote a diary of which the early pages have been useful in her great book, *My Apprenticeship*, but which she has steadily refused to publish lest it should hurt the feelings of people who are still alive or the relatives of those who are dead. It contains, no doubt, the story of Balfour and Webb behind the scenes during the education controversy of 1902; here are the details of Cabinet making and the full story of the two Labour Governments; here, too, her first impressions of Winston Churchill and Lloyd George when they lunched with the Webbs in the days before they were famous. Some day we shall learn from the diary a story that many of us have heard Mrs. Webb tell of what happened behind the scenes when astonished officials learned that a woman had taken on the job of revealing the truth about the Poor Law. One got these stories best from Mrs. Webb late on a Saturday evening. They came after the main topics had been, if not exhausted, at least comprehensively discussed.

One got to Passfield Corner, where the Webbs had been working intensively all the week, for tea on a Saturday. The condition of the world, and the Labour and Socialist Movement in particular, and the immediate topics of the day were systematically dealt with. One could almost hear Mrs. Webb putting a mental tick after each item when nothing further of importance was likely to be said on the subject. The long, meaty conversation would continue at night by the fire; Mrs. Webb sat just as you will see her in Nicholson's remarkable painting, with her long elegant hand warming by the flame and her authoritative voice emphasising, with confirmation at intervals by Sidney, just those morals which she thought arose from the reminiscences. At half past eight the next morning you would be having breakfast and Mrs. Webb, who had already been up for several hours and done a lot of work, would be standing between you and the window, lecturing you, I remember on one occasion, on the defects of the Douglas Credit System. At 11.0 there was the walk over the heather and through the sunken lanes of Hampshire. There was always the incident with Sandy, the white dog that you will also see in Nicholson's picture, when he would bark violently at Mrs. Webb while she beat the ground with a walking stick and scolded him until he was silent. At lunch there would be some distinguished visitor (for years almost invariably an authority on Russia) with whom they would check up passages in the then unpublished *Soviet Communism*. Russia would have been the main topic of the morning talk and it would still be pursued during tea, when the taxi would arrive to take one home, so full of mental food that only the strongest digestions were not somewhat exhausted.

Personally I loved it and so did most other visitors. One murmur, affectionate rather than cross, usually followed Mrs. Webb's footsteps. She managed one; she ran the conversation; she put things into categories; she really did not like people who were not as disciplined and effective as she was herself. The caricature which Wells wrote of the Webbs in the *New Machiavelli* had, like most of the pictures with which he has explained his disagreements with his friends, at least an element of malicious truth. I think this aspect of Mrs. Webb became less apparent as she grew older. But what Wells did not then say what he discovered in later years of renewed friendship was that quite apart from the public side of the Webbs' entertainment, there was a continuous undercurrent of personal kindness and affection which I have seldom known equalled even in houses where the conversation was less regulated, scientific and well-informed.

Soviet Russia increasingly excluded all other topics of conversation at Passfield Corner. After the Labour fiasco of '31 and their visit to the Soviet Union, the Webbs became completely absorbed in the Soviet Union, believing, as they said, that the future no longer turned very much on British policy, and that the world's centre of gravity had turned to the one State in which the Fabian dream had become a reality. They were uncritical admirers, for they were always more interested in large-scale efficiency rather than in issues of liberty. They used, very pleasantly, to apologise for talking only about the U.S.S.R. by saying, "most people when they get over 70 become obsessed with something, usually with themselves. We think it better to be obsessed with Soviet Communism." Together they worked out the precise answer to every difficulty put up to them about the U.S.S.R. just as they had in the past decided on a joint answer to every inquiry about Socialist theory. At 80 Mrs. Webb would shake a tigerish finger at anyone who ventured to dispute whether in fact things worked just as she and Sidney had decided things did work in the Soviet Union. They combined this uncritical advocacy with withering contempt for the Communist Party in this country. They were describing the Socialist State they had always believed in; they did not like the practice of Communist tactics applied to Britain.

The last time I saw Mrs. Webb was about a month ago. I wish I had a photograph of her in this final stage of her extraordinary career. She looked incredibly distinguished; with a fine lace cap round her head and her face a fine mesh of wrinkles. Rembrandt would have loved to paint her. She had lost nothing of her superb dignity, her austerity or her unique elegance. She was more like an eagle than ever, or, as Raymond Mortimer, who was with me, put it, she was like the most venerable abbess who has ever known what power was. As I left I wondered whether it was the last time that I should see Mrs. Webb. She was, I am convinced, if you consider her as a character, as an intellect, as a writer and a sociologist, the most remarkable woman that this country has known.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE WEBB PARTNERSHIP

IT does not often happen, in the history of human affairs, that anyone attains equal eminence in the world of letters and the world of action; succeeds, that is to say, both in writing books which will stand the test of time and (what may well be as significant) of the setters of examination papers, and in blazing the trail of practical political activity. This was, however, the achievement of that amazing partnership which was broken last Friday, after fifty years, by the death of Beatrice Webb.

The bare list of titles of the Webbs' books is impressive enough; more impressive is it to count on one's fingers the number of them which are "authoritative," "exhaustive," "indispensable to the student." No one would venture upon a study of Trade Unionism who had not read the Webbs' history, or of Local Government without having made acquaintance with the eight or so great volumes, or of the U.S.S.R. without acquiring *Soviet Communism*. The proportion of the Webbs' published work which is really ephemeral is astonishingly low; even such a comparatively lesser effort as *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, published nearly twenty years ago, contains much which is true and relevant to-day.

This corpus would be enough to secure laurels for most of us; and in fact, some of the published obituaries of Beatrice Webb have seemed to suggest that that was all, that she was a learned lady with an interest in sociology who in collaboration with her husband wrote many important books. Nothing could be much more misleading. For, from the very first, the partnership was not merely intellectual, but in the highest degree purposive; it sought to find out the facts, indeed, but still more to alter them, to mould English society in the right direction, the direction of Socialism. For Beatrice, according to her own autobiographical evidence, the decision was made when she discovered that the social-plaster type of activity represented by the C.O.S. of the 'eighties could provide no answer to the problem of poverty and degradation, that the cause of poverty must be sought for at its roots and drastic remedies thought out and applied; and the partnership thereupon set to work in a manner which, for erudition combined with practical activity has only been paralleled, I venture to suggest, by the collaboration of Marx and Engels.

Few of this generation, to whom the Webbs are not more than honoured names, will have a real recollection of the extraordinary efficiency with which they tackled the problem of "getting something done about it." For them an idea was not an effective idea until it had taken on flesh and was at any rate set upon the road to becoming a fact; and to that end no detail was too insignificant for their attention. Lunches and dinners, letters, circulars, private discussions—all were studied and used to the best effect to further the cause in hand, whether that were the radicalisation of the Liberal programme, the better government of London, or the break-up of the Poor Law. No Socialist intellectuals of our time have so well appreciated the need to understand the material with which any reformer has to work, and this may account in part for the remarkable stability of many of the organisations

which they founded or helped to found—the Fabian Society, the London School of Economics, the *New Statesman*, and even the Labour Party. The Webbs, of course, did not actually found the Labour Party. But their studies in Trade Unionism taught their Socialist colleagues where to look for the foundations of working-class solidarity; they were largely responsible for both the constitution and the programme of the Party after the last war; and, of all its middle-class supporters, they best understood its nature, its strength and its weaknesses. For, unlike many "practical" politicians, the Webbs have never fallen in love with the organisations which they have created; they have never developed violent sectional patriotisms or shown a disposition to work themselves to death or hysteria for the sake of the League of Such-and-Such; they have retained a grasp of the wider issues.

This goes far to explain the discrepancy which some have found between Sidney's phrase about "the inevitability of gradualism" and the Webbs' subsequent passionate championship of the Russian Revolution. The former remark, produced in the 'twenties about the Labour Party and its programme, was not merely true but so obvious that no one has ever effectively challenged it. But when the Webbs decided to go to Russia, they saw that a real political revolution made possible things which in England could only be Utopian dreams. I do not think it entirely fantastic to suggest that in the U.S.S.R. they found their Fabian dream, of experts in leadership experimenting, with full powers, over a wide field, and on an ascetic standard of life. Recollect Shaw's early letters about "our ravenous plain meals, our bicyling, the Webbs' insatiable spooning over social statistics." Anyone who went to the U.S.S.R. in 1932 will remember a certain resemblance.

One word more. Beatrice Webb said to me, as no doubt to many others, "We are the B's—Benevolent Bureaucrats. There are A's—Aristocratic Anarchists"—and I gathered that most intellectuals were A's. Beatrice was certainly a bureaucrat, in the sense that she was deeply concerned in making things work; she was benevolent, not in a spirit of universal love (the Sermon on the Mount roused her to great irritation) but in the sense of never bearing childish or spiteful malice to anyone, however much they might have abused her. She did not really like anarchists, but she recognised their value in the human experiment. And, almost to the date of her death, she had never ceased to show an eager interest in what those younger than herself were doing, thinking and achieving. This, the selfless concern with all which could make for the greatest happiness of humanity, is what makes some of us feel proud to say: "I knew Beatrice Webb." MARGARET COLE

CONCERTS, PAST AND FUTURE

It is a sign of the relatively healthy state of music-making in London alone just now, that it should require a whole-time critic (which I am not) to keep pace with it. Thus I can do no more than mention the series of four programmes—distinguished by a careful combination of "classical" and modern music—which have been given recently at Friends' House, under the direction of Alec Sherman, a conductor who is coming to the fore. This venture, which will surely be followed up, is worth steady encouragement.

Then there is the indefatigable and conscientious Walter Goehr, the second of whose two orchestral concerts will take place on May 15th at the Wigmore Hall. This will include Haydn's Symphony *Le Midi*, which dates from the composer's first year at Esterhazy; Webern's *Five Movements for String Orchestra;* Van Dieren's setting of Spenser's 7th Sonnet—perhaps the best work of this didactic and rather sickly composer; and (by special request) a repetition of Britten's *Les Illuminations*. Both the latter works will be sung by Peter Pears.

The sixth of the Boosey and Hawkes concerts, which occurred on April 28th, was notable for the first performance of Gordon Jacob's *Clarinet Quintet*, and the first performance in England of Britten's *String Quartet No. 1*. The concert began with Fauré's *Theme and Variations*, op. 73, for piano—a work of the utmost delicacy and charm, which ought to be more often heard. The pianist, Mr. Philip Lévi, has considerable distinction of manner without anything very remarkable in the way of technique. Perhaps it was consciousness of this shortcoming which led him to give a curiously deprecatory performance, as if extemporising in a drawing room. A hundred years ago, I fancy, most pianists played like this; but we are unused to the style—which has its advantages—from the concerto-bred executants of the present age.

After this Miss Megan Foster sang songs by Chausson, Koechlin and Roussel, with precision and a sense of style. A later group contained Warlock's lovely and touching "The Bayly berith the Bell Away," and three songs by John Ireland, "whose position as one of the outstanding song-writers of the British Musical Renaissance," we were informed in the programme note, "is now too widely recognised to need further emphasis." I shall not emphasise it further.

The *Clarinet Quintet* of Gordon Jacob may be succinctly described as pleasant minor poetry in the English tradition. The emotion seems concerned with Nature rather than with man in his relation to other men, and the style is eclectic without the slightest trace of vulgarity. This music is sometimes dull but never ugly; it is at a disadvantage in possessing insufficient motive power to keep the listener's attention continuously engaged; day-dreaming is encouraged—which is perhaps why the audience showed so much approval at the end. One would not care to affirm positively that Mr. Jacob has nothing of original interest to say: one only wishes that he (and how many other British composers too!) could forget the very existence of Dr. Vaughan Williams, whose style cannot—any more than Brahms's—be drawn upon with impunity.

If this was minor poetry, the Britten Quartet was very definitely of the major order. I feel myself that this quartet is probably as fine a work as any Mr. Britten has yet written. For depth of feeling it is on a level with the best pages of the *Sinfonia da Requiem* and the *Michelangelo Sonnets;* and the actual writing is consummate, though the result is evidently extremely difficult to play. The movements on the whole follow a classical pattern (the first movement is strophic in form); but the composer has invented themes which encourage as complex and varied a metrical structure as that of a poem by Hopkins. There is not a note—not a stress—which is not precisely intended. From the first bar, where the two violins and viola exalt a high, tight bud of notes (D, E, F sharp), below which the 'cello performs a series of full-toned, bell-like pizzicato phrases, the music creates a complete world of its own—a world which compels our fullest attention throughout the 670 bars of its existence. There is no opportunity for day-dreaming here: we have to listen with all our ears—as to one of the later quartets of Beethoven or Bartok. These sounds are not always, or indeed often, easy on the ear; they do not lull or charm: they keep us perched on that height where the aesthetic experience is most dire in its demands on our co-operation. The thing of beauty is not handed to us on a plate: we have to go and get it—which means entering the composer's own world, outside ourselves. Yet I see no reason to suppose, as some critics have done, that this indicates a departure, on the composer's part, from the charm and directness of his *Hymn to St. Cecilia* or *Les Illuminations*. An idiom suited to one expression will not suit another, and Mr. Britten may be expected to maintain his ability to use both the instruments he has forged with so much pains.

The Griller Quartet, with Frederick Thurston, made no bones about Gordon Jacob's work. When it came to the Britten Quartet, their ardours and endurances compelled the highest respect, but also, be it said, some occasional anxiety. Music like this demands the highest possible finish, together with perfect intonation easily achieved. The Griller Quartet is the only one in the country now capable of approximating to this ideal.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Royal Academy

A rigorous critic might point out that among over 700 exhibits at Burlington House one could not find material enough for one mixed show of average excellence at the Leicester Galleries. It would be kinder to note that the proportion of literate works is noticeably higher than it has been within living memory. The Academicians have evidently rejected a lot of paintings of the type that used to be most popular, and one can no longer enjoy many good laughs at problem-pictures and portraits painted in ice-cream. Indeed the works of such practitioners as Mr. Leslie Foot, Mr. Frampton, Mr. Gunn and Mr. Jagger positively detonate in this newly sobered company. Moreover, three painters of serious reputation have been induced to become Associates, Mr. le Bas, Mr. Coldstream and Mr. Wadsworth. One cannot but admire the chivalry, even if one thinks it misplaced, with which these gentlemen have brought their prestige to the support of what seems a lost cause. Doubtless they nurse the hope that they will be pioneers of an effective reform, but it would be a pity if such optimism diverted their energy from the practice of their art. Unluckily Mr. Coldstream and Mr. Wadsworth have sent nothing to the exhibition—indeed the latter, we believe, never has shown at the Academy—and so the public is given no chance to compare these artists with old favourites like Mr. Cadogan Cowper and Dame Laura Knight. But Mr. le Bas has sent excellent pictures, including an impressive portrait of a soldier which one hopes will be bought by the Chantrey Bequest. The architectural exhibits include a revised version of the R.A. plan for rebuilding London; and, what would be hardly less alarming if there were any risk of it being realised, a surprising design by Sir Edwin Lutyens. This immensely gifted architect, who is justly famous for his sense of humour, offers us a sort of Abbot's Kitchen in the Early English style. This might make a scholarly crematorium, but it is meant to be tacked on to the west end of Westminster Abbey.

"The Crystal Ball," at the London Pavilion

Farce, of the fairly screaming order, about fortune-telling, imaginary aunts, other people's flats, car accidents and a love that survives everything. Paulette Goddard has a dead eye in the shooting gallery, makes passes over crystals and is liable to take her clothes off or have them ripped off for her. Ray Milland in pursuit, with William Bendix, as a chauffeur, assisting. The nicest touches are in the incidentals: outraged waiters, the "lady with a pekingese" who enjoys a glimpse of goings-on across the corridor. It seems unnecessary, in a film that is about as immediate as *Charlie's Aunt*, to introduce a belated hint of sabotage.

Correspondence

PLAIN SPEAKING

SIR,—Could your Case for Plain Speaking be carried one stage farther? You omit reference to the frontier question; yet it has been at the root of the trouble between our Soviet and our Polish (and other) allies. Since the war began the U.S.S.R. has extended her European frontiers in five directions and on four distinct grounds. Her incorporation of parts of Finland was made on strategic grounds, that of the Baltic States on allegedly electoral grounds, that of the East Polish provinces largely on racial grounds, that of Bessarabia on historical grounds and that of Bukovina for a variety of reasons. The United States Government has categorically refused to recognise most of these incorporations.

If we continue to shelve the frontier question there can be no real unity between the United Nations. At one time it seemed as though the answer would be sought along the lines laid down in the Atlantic Charter. Is there any cause to abandon those lines? The disarmament of aggressors (Points 6 and 8) would put Russia's strategic need for expansion in another light; the accepted right of self-determination (Points 2 and 3) would provide a basis for determining the other grounds. But self-determination, as

German behaviour at Brest-Litovsk and as more recent occasions have shown, can cover a multitude of sins. Would it be too much to expect Allied agreement on the proposition that plebiscites policed by a directly interested Power are not worthy of the name?

J. HAMPDEN JACKSON

Board of Extra-Mural Studies,
Cambridge

SIR,—In your issue of May 1st you call for "plain speaking." May I, a Czech, who has no particular sympathies for the Polish Government and is one of the Czechs sceptical as to the planned Czechoslovak-Polish Federation, be allowed to make some comments?

You state plainly, that the "murder of thousands of Polish officers" has not been the sole reason for the Polish-Sovjet break; the matter going back to 1939. That means that the policy of the Polish Government has been antagonistic to the wishes of the Russian Government for two to three years. I refuse to believe that the Polish Government in London would have pursued such a policy without the knowledge, or assistance, if not connivance or encouragement by the British and American Governments. So the Polish-Russian break is in reality a British-Russian and American-Russian conflict.

This is the first conclusion. The second conclusion touches a fundamental point: Is Europe to be governed after this war by power-politics or the "Atlantic Charter"? Your answer—referring to spheres of influence—is, by implication, power-politics. If so, then let the British, American and Russian Governments state it plainly in their broadcasts to the occupied countries. In tortured Europe men, women and children are fighting hard; harder—I think—than the British and Russian soldiers, because they fight under worse conditions. They fight bravely for freedom. The freedom they envisage is—to be free to choose their own Government. When they will be told that the only alternative is German or Russian, German or British-American domination, they will think twice before risking their lives daily.

To give an example: I am opposed to Communism, but if my people at home would choose to introduce a Communist system in Czechoslovakia, I would bow to their decision and accept it. But I would never accept a Communist system dominated by Russia, or under Russian pressure, or imposed by a Government under Russian control.

So you are right, Sir, the time has arrived for plain speaking. But do speak plainly, not in halves.

London. A Czech friend who does not sign himself because his family and friends are in occupied Czechoslovakia

DESIGN IN INDUSTRY

SIR,—All who are actively engaged in the ticklish business of introducing art to industry will welcome Freda White's fresh and imaginative approach to furniture-making, which is a section of national design very much in need of reconstruction. There is only one point, and that an incidental one, which calls for brief contradiction. She says truly enough that there is no modern glass to compare with Swedish Orrefors, and goes on to suggest that unless we can kidnap their chief designer, Simon Gate, we should send our own designers to Orrefors to learn their job.

That suggestion seems to me to come from a wrong diagnosis of the problem. We do not lack designers equal to the best in Sweden, and they are eager to apply their talents to this field. What is necessary is:

(1) a firm decision on the part of English glass manufacturers to employ good designers; and

(2) confidence on the part of these manufacturers that if they take such a decision, they can depend on the support of retailers and consumers.

I am in a position to report that the first of these steps has already been taken by certain manufacturers in this country. I will not go so far as to say that the considerable obstacles which arise from the obstinacy of the retailers' buyers (especially those employed by the big stores) and from the conservatism of the public have yet been overcome—that part of the battle has still to be fought. But the experiment will be made: good glass will be designed and put on the market by English manufacturers. Orrefors has set a standard which we shall equal or excel. This country has had a fine tradition in glassmaking, dating from Saxon times, and I do not believe that it is altogether extinct.

HERBERT READ

Design Research Unit,
10 Hertford Street, London, W.1.

SIR,—As a regular reader of your journal as well as a designer of both luxury and utility furniture, I am writing to agree with Miss White, that customers are simply ignorant, modest and hypnotised by smart salesmanship into buying the newest and dearest nastiness. I also believe her complaint that, with the exception of the traditional Windsor chair, our cabinet makers and mass-production factories have only achieved furniture for the rich and for the bourgeois.

I cannot, however, accept the implication that a large scale training scheme and industrialisation of the Scottish highlands where cultivation of birch trees hand in hand with the making of simple furniture would be the ideal progressive step.

Miss White leaves out of consideration the question of the use and effect of plastics as component furniture parts. Does Miss White know that experiments have already been made in combining plastic compositions or synthetic resins with wood veneers to build up a stronger and more satisfactory laminated board? And there is ample scope for more ambitious developments. Whilst I would abhor the elimination of wood entirely from furniture (cheap or otherwise) a happy compromise by the use of plastics for purely constructional elements which leave the actual visible surface and "design" to be fashioned by the individual craftsman out of wood seems to be a possible solution, appropriate to modern post-war conditions. This compromise could very easily be carried through by collaboration of the plastic and wood-working factories. As an initial guidance, an independent "inquiry" into designs and costs could be instituted so that the best possible advantage may be taken of the vast number of factories already established. The plastic industry has developed enormously on work of national importance for war. When turned over to work for peace, the designers will have to study most carefully how best to use this new material to obtain articles of furniture, soundly made, well proportioned and practical at a much lower cost than hitherto available in this country.

REGISTERED DESIGNER FOR INDUSTRY

ETHICS WITHOUT REVELATION

SIR,—Is this your last word? Are you not being a little unfair to the Rector of Dartington? Let us go back to the dictionary (Webster). Ethics is "the science of moral duty" and Religion is "the act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God having power over their destiny."

We all agree that without any religion at all you can become a good ethical man, as Mr. Kingsley Martin is. But as the Rector points out, this is not enough, especially in dealing with such subtle manifestations of evil as Hitler or Fascism. We have therefore got to have religion, but, as you say, the Rector goes too far in asking rational people to accept outmoded theological doctrines.

What, then, is the right course? Surely back to the Bible. Read the sayings of Jesus, the most religious man in history, who talked no theology, but truth as He saw it. This truth may be clouded by the copyists, whose testaments in Greek are all we have to read, but something of the awareness of God which Jesus felt will dawn upon us. As you say, Jesus's concept of God was "other worldly." Reality to Him was quite different from what seems reality to us. But was not He right? Looking at the mess we have got into with our ethics and improved science of moral duty, must not we admit that we are hopelessly wrong—we, you, the Rector and all the theologians?

NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

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DAVID

JONATHAN CAPE

SIR,—May I confess to a certain bewilderment at reading one of the key arguments in your recent replies to the Rector of Dartington? The question, you say, is not the utility of doctrinal Christianity, but its credibility. May I ask, in all seriousness, what it is that you find so incredible about Christian doctrines? Since, on your own showing, this is *the* question, it would surely be worth while enlarging somewhat, so as to enlighten those who, like myself, happen to consider these doctrines to be perfectly credible.

I suppose you prefer to relegate us "believers" to the categories of the "old," the "superstitious," or the "unscientific," but in fact we do not always fit in. For example, I am by profession what is popularly called "a scientist"; I am not an aged Victorian, not even a middle-aged Georgian; and I cut my debating teeth on those gods of the agnostics—Marx and Darwin, Frazer and Freud. Yet somehow I was persuaded to become a Christian, to accept all the doctrines of that institution which you regard as the stronghold of superstition—the Catholic Church. Furthermore, I have found that these doctrines, far from being antagonistic to my scientific, philosophic and sociological ideas, serve rather to harmonise, balance or synthesise them, according to the metaphor of choice.

Of course, my personal experience as such is of little import. But what *I* have found credible, without the support of any strong traditional background of belief, others can, and in fact do, find credible; without any affront to their intelligence, or any compartmenting of their mental activities.

So I think, to be fair, that you ought to come out into the open with it; the onus is on you. *What* do you find incredible? And with *what* is it incompatible? And *why*? Unless some measure of agreement or understanding is reached on this key question, the leaders and supporters of the two sides in this argument are wasting their ink.

HERBERT F. RANCE

Gray's Cottage,
Candlemas Lane, Beaconsfield.

[I chose Marx, Darwin, Frazer and Freud because they are leaders of four types of infidelity. Marx was only one of those who suggested that history can be understood in terms that exclude the intervention of the Providence postulated by many religious historians; Darwin offered the nineteenth century an evolutionary picture that was incompatible with the thesis of a single act of creation; Frazer presented a body of knowledge which showed that people who had never heard of Christ fashioned for themselves religions based on the death and rebirth of the god, and other familiar doctrines. Freud's examination of the unconscious answers many questions about the origin of religious belief. I am well aware that it is possible to find ways of "getting round" the implications of these writers without denying the facts they present, and I know that many people can divide their minds into watertight compartments by a knack, of which I have not personally the clue. My thesis was that, taken together, these writers offer a body of knowledge of an approach to human and philosophic problems that is not compatible with revealed religion. I am confirmed in my view, (*a*) by having all of my life known religious people who got over these difficulties by arguing that revealed religion had valuable moral effects on the individual, and (*b*) by finding that when pressed they produced secondary, indirect or poetical interpretations of phrases in the creeds which literally interpreted put too great a strain on credulity.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—There is a misprint in my letter in your issue of May 1st which gravely alters the sense of what I wrote. I was saying that I doubted if you and your supporters appreciated the truly formidable case being presented "to you by Fascism" not "by you to Fascism."

R. A. EDWARDS

Dartington Parsonage, Totnes.

COLONIAL-BRITISH FRIENDSHIP

SIR,—If we are really to do our best to make sure that the tremendous struggle upon which we are now engaged, and for which we are receiving the utmost sacrifice from the youth of our land, is not to be in vain so far as those whom we now call "Colonials" are concerned, and also for the happy future evolution of the Empire, then it seems to me that we must somehow be more active in projecting the "Colonies" and the "Colonial view-point" upon the British public.

Travelling about the country one is struck by many things, but two matters stand out with surprising clearness—the British public as a whole know very little about the "Colonies," and are not very much interested therein, and the material put across to them is sometimes terrible indeed. For example, it is generally accepted, largely because of certain films, that coloured people are mainly barbarians, and those who are not are only fitted for menial duties. All this needs immediate correction, and Mr. Kenneth Little, writing recently in the *Crown Colonist*, has suggested an excellent way which deserves our attention.

He advises the setting up of an Anglo-Colonial cultural body either by the Colonial Office or the British Council, which would have attached thereto a B.B.C. and a Press representative, also representatives from existing organisations working in the interests of the "Colonies." The main function of such a body would be to advise on and amplify the presentation of the Colonial peoples and their countries to the British public and to stimulate interest generally in their development. One very useful bit of work which could be tackled at once with excellent results, is to make use of students and other visitors from the "Colonies" in order to put over to the British public the real facts, and also at the same time to give to these students contacts with the best side of English life. The League of Coloured Peoples has just carried through a very successful experiment along these lines during their recent annual meeting in Liverpool. There is a rich fund of good will afloat which should be capitalised at once, if we really want to do our best to help usher in a new and better order among all peoples, and more particularly between Britain and her Colonies.

HAROLD A. MOODY,
Founder and President

The League of Coloured Peoples,
164, Queen's Road, S.E.15.

LEAVE THE CHAP ALONE

SIR,—In case any of your readers who may have read Mr. Hopkins' letter in your last issue are under any misapprehension as to the aims and objects of this organisation we should appreciate the opportunity to enumerate them as follows:

(1) To present to the people their rich musical inheritance.
(2) To utilise fully the stimulating power of music to inspire the people.
(3) To provide recreation and entertainment for war-workers and members of the Forces.
(4) To stimulate the composition of music appropriate to our time.
(5) To foster and further the art of music on the principle that true art can move the people to work for the betterment of society.

I can assure you that there is nothing conspiratorial in our activities for putting the above objects into effect.

We quite fail to see the point of Mr. Hopkins' reference to meetings we may hold to discuss our problems, and I would draw his attention and that of your readers to one which is being held here on Sunday evening at 6.30 to discuss "Musicians Against Fascism," which we are sure they will find of interest.

WILL SAHNOW,
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"ENGLAND," Mrs. Webb was fond of saying, "is the best climate in the world; it's never too hot or too cold to work or walk." No doubt there is a connection between this moderate temperature and the notoriously temperate character of British life. There is often a measure of truth in these popular observations about "national character," vague and unscientific though the concept is. It is not altogether an accident that commercialism and industrialism have developed in temperate climates and that it was among the shopkeeping and trading peoples in the temperate, ocean-facing countries that Protestant individualism grew and maintained itself against authoritarian reaction in the 16th and 17th centuries. Liberty and bananas have never flourished side by side, and, at least until the 20th century, enterprise, discovery, literature and the arts have been for the most part products of coastal civilisations, holding their own by sea-power on the edge of vast, amorphous empires in which ignorant and poverty-stricken peasants have been easily, if loosely, controlled by corrupt autocracies.

The relation between climate and geography and national character was the subject of much 19th century speculation. To-day wireless and aircraft, which seem certain some day to impose unity of organisation on the whole world, have removed much of the advantage of sea-power, and made it possible for the remote areas of land Empires to share the civilising influences that in days of Mediterranean or Atlantic supremacy were mainly confined to Greece, Rome or Venice, Holland, France, Spain or Britain. All these civilisations depended, as Sir Halford Mackinder showed in writings which were the foundation of geopolitics, on the existence of conditions in which sea bases could be maintained impregnable from the attacks of the great land Powers.

Here we have one of the real clues to national character. The insularity of Britain, its security from foreign invasion, its flying start in industry and early settlement of linguistic and racial divisions that were still splitting most nations during the 19th century—these account for our notorious tolerance and humour and explain, too, why we were always able to adopt an exasperatingly superior moral attitude to political problems, to "muddle through" and lose all the battles until the last, which we are supposed, not quite accurately, always to have won. We were able to be internally tolerant and comparatively sane in European problems, because we were not really frightened; we could win the last battle and muddle through to victory because we had more money and more ships than other people and therefore could afford to make mistakes on a scale that would have been ruinous to those who lacked our reserves. We could afford to adopt moral attitudes to issues which were matters of life and death to others, because in the last resort we were secure and believed we need not mix ourselves up in any dispute unless we decided that our interests and our views of right and wrong were sufficiently in harmony to drive us into action. Air power means that these conditions have ended for us; they have moved to the other side of the Atlantic where American arguments about morality, isolationism and national interests are strikingly similar to ours a generation ago. When Mr. Eden declared a few weeks ago in America that Britain would never again turn her back on the Continent, he was stating a novel proposition which many of his hearers may have thought to have been the result of a moral choice; in fact, it was the inescapable deduction from the fact that the Channel is no longer a guarantee of security, even though it remains a much better defence than any other form of tank-trap yet devised. It would be a fascinating essay in the art of speculation to prophesy the effect on character of this insular and at the same time imperial people, as it gradually realises that we are now securely linked with the Continent, whether it remains a cockpit of squabbling Powers or is forced under pressure to accept unifying control.

If speculations of this kind come into the head of Mr. Brogan, whose very able and readable book on *The English People** I have just been reading, he does not allow them to appear. Occasionally there are sentences which show that he could draw a conclusion or think philosophically if he wished. But Mr. Brogan is both practical and prudent. He writes primarily for an American audience which asks to understand England and for an English audience whose curiosity about its own country is stimulated by the discovery that Americans and other foreign people are not quite sure that England is to-day what they assumed her to be five years ago. Those who can stand learning a lot at a time will find endless riches in this book. Few of Mr. Brogan's facts are to be found in text books. Mr. Brogan belongs to the modern school of political students who use sources of information that the older school of political philosophers have never heard of. When he writes of democracy, he really knows how an election is carried out in Glasgow, and he knows more than most American professors of political science about how it is carried out in Chicago. When he is talking about education he discusses with amiable familiarity not only the fifth form at St. Dominic's, but also the influence on English life of Greyfriars as described in *The Magnet*. Mr. Brogan puts much wit into footnotes. Talking of the British superiority which infuriates foreigners, he remarks that among the characteristics that will disappear, if the public school disappears, is the unconscious assumption that Englishmen need not study to please or understand when they are abroad because everywhere everyone will appreciate their merits. He adds in a footnote that with men this "shyness, pride or diffidence of the public school type is attractive, even if it is a national luxury," but that it is less attractive in women who have been sent to English girls' schools which imitate the great boys' schools and who have brought away with them a similar indifference to the art of making a good impression.

> A girl who doesn't mind appearing sulky or indifferent is no asset to the world and the shopping voice of many products of Roedean or Wycombe Abbey is one of the most distressing sounds in the world. Fortunately most English girls get over this stage, but those who don't, recruit that large class of formidable middle-aged women with whom England is too well supplied. There ought to be a law about it.

In his chapter on British democracy Mr. Brogan dwells on the contrast between the British system, which aims at maintaining inequality while giving the legal power to a political party to change everything (including the unequal class system), and the American definition of democracy which limits legal power at every point and boasts of the universal atmosphere of equality even though in America, more than in England, the distribution of money impairs the theoretical equality. He remarks that the differences in the social background of Mr. Roosevelt's Cabinet—and that depends on money rather than on birth to a greater extent in America than in England—are less marked than in Mr. Churchill's. The differences, however, are less important because

> Mr. Roosevelt and all his Cabinet have been accustomed, from very early years, to a society which despite all efforts of schools, advertising, clubs and the rest, makes the creation of effective social barriers difficult and their maintenance a perpetually repeated task. American social fences have to be continually repaired; in England they are like wild hedges, they grow if left alone.

The best of Mr. Brogan is his sturdy refusal to fall for bunk. How many Americans, I wonder, have wondered at the prominence given in English speech and literature to hunting and cricket, and asked why, if they are such perfect symbols of English life, they seem so remote from the lives of ordinary people? Mr. Brogan explains, without more than the necessary display of facts and figures, that Britain is in fact overwhelmingly an urban nation and that the national sport is not cricket (let alone fox-hunting) or Rugby football, but Association football, which interests at least six times as many English people, as spectators or gamblers or participants, as any other form of sport.

My only trouble with Mr. Brogan is that he hedges. He shows an admirable mastery of the facts in his chapters on Empire, on English religion and, perhaps best, on Education. When discussing the inequalities and class basis of the English educational system, he comes very near to stating the radical conclusion of his own argument. But it is typical of his one serious weakness that he ends this chapter by saying that "in England even more than in Ireland, the inevitable never happens. If for once the inevitable is going to happen the public schools are doomed." No bet was ever more carefully hedged. It is inevitable and yet the one thing that never happens is inevitable. If the inevitable does happen, then a radical change, which splits opinion from top to bottom in this country, will occur. Mr. Brogan will have been right, or at least not wrong, in either case.

Let me take one more instance in which Mr. Brogan says something important, but avoids the second and less popular half of the truth. He writes:

> The experience of the last few years has shown that the mass of men fight far better for their own country than they fight for any general cause, that the transformation of the general old-fashioned view that it is the proper thing to die for one's country into the new view that one's country is not worth dying for but that some cause is, is far harder than used to be thought.

This is perfectly true. Nationalism is still the greatest force in the world. The rulers of Soviet Russia have reinforced the revolutionary resistance of 1919 with the old patriotic appeal that saved Russia against Napoleon. No working-class International has yet been found as strong as the patriotic bond that divides the workers who had only (according to Shelley as well as Marx) to unite to throw off their chains. It is true that workers in the Axis countries have responded much less than was expected to appeals not to fight for Fascists against their Soviet comrades. But Mr. Brogan knows that this is not the whole story. Note the prudence with which he evades the analysis of a problem which would take him into deep water. He does not say that men will not die for a cause outside their national loyalty; indeed in saying that to persuade men to do so "is far harder than used to be thought," by implication he justifies those who believe that nationalism is in process of being superseded. If he had wished he could have referred to the International Brigade which fought for an idea in Spain, or to the part which the class-consciousness of the well-to-do in France played in the surrender of that once most patriotic of countries to its traditional enemy. But to refer to this difficult and complicating aspect of events would open Mr. Brogan to the charge of being what in fact he is—an intellectual—even perhaps, at heart a Left Intellectual. To avoid the risk of any such grave accusation he assumes the role of the shrewd, detached and practical "foreigner," with "an Irish and Scottish background," and he is always on the look-out at the critical point of the argument for a happy turn of phrase or illustration which will save him running the risk of becoming a reformer or prophet. His favourite trick is to sidetrack his own argument by a neat little attack on some intellectuals who, because they are less academic or less endowed than he with native caution, have ventured to draw with too great a confidence of timing or phraseology, the conclusions which the reader must, if he is logical, draw from Mr. Brogan. Writers on political and social questions today are in a quandary. It is difficult to be honest and wholeheartedly take sides; it is impossible in practice not to be on one side or the other of the fence.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

**The English People.* By D. W. Brogan. Hamilton, 10s. 6d.

SUBJECT INDIA

Subject India. By H. N. BRAILSFORD. *Gollancz.* 6s.

I should like to quote in full a passage on page 139 which exhibits Mr. Brailsford at his best and fairest, but it is so long that I must compress it. The gist is that British commercial policy and *laissez faire* are the central causes of Indian poverty, but the social structure of India and Hindu beliefs militate against economic (he might have added also social) progress, and the result of subjection is that Indians ascribe their ills to the foreigner. They must be free before they can fight the native forces which maintain superstition. "They have passed through no experience comparable to the rationalistic and realistic movements which, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, lifted Europe out of the Middle Ages. Such movements could take no root, because, so soon as India was ripe for any collective thinking, she inevitably turned nationalist. *Nationalism criticises the foreigner : it does not turn inward to analyse the inheritance of the past.*" (The italics are mine.)

The best friend of the new India would be he who, *without giving offence to her eager susceptibilities*, should convince her of the underlying causes of her own subjection—a philosophy which minimised the importance of this world and even changed it from a reality to a shadow : and a social system which split her peoples into a hundred separate rifts and made union impossible—and suggest the means by which a repetition of a similar calamity is to be avoided. For like causes will produce like results.

Mr. Brailsford might succeed in this delicate task ; because his vigorous indictment of British rule would acquit him of any undue bias in favour of his fellow-countrymen ; whereas a critic lacking this qualification would be set down as an enemy of Indians and would command no hearing among them.

He does, in fact, remind India of some of her weaknesses and he does concede certain merits to British policy and administration—enough in both cases to demonstrate the essential fairness of his mind, which is on the whole a judicial one. For instance : "The Indian mind enjoys literary studies, logic and metaphysics, and is at its ease in legal debates. Indians rushed into the legal profession and neglected careers which might have ended Indian poverty." "The rulers gave order and peace : vanquished plague and famine : their engineers conquered distance, brought fertility to deserts, drew power from the Himalayan snows." "Of the benefits which British rule has conferred on this peninsula, one stands out conspicuous and indisputable. We have given it unity, and with unity both internal peace and a vast free market." From the figures of the balance of trade (which has become technically "unfavourable" to India, and therefore actually favourable to her, since 1931) and from the repatriation of the sterling debt and the purchase of the British-owned railways, he draws the natural conclusion that, economically, India's destiny will be in her own hands. It is true that he more than balances this piece of optimism with the reflection that over a very long period of years there was an excess of exports : but the ultimate achievement seems a respectable one, not wholly compatible with exploitation.

Since the early period of easy alliances with the people of the soil (which left us the legacy of a considerable mixed population), and of unashamed plunder by the servants of the Company, came to an end, our worst faults have been a social exclusiveness (corresponding to a similar self-withdrawal on the part of Indians, but tending in the direction of contempt and even insolence) and a timidity which stood in the way of the tackling of grave evils and perpetuated the then fashionable British tendency to *laissez faire*. In Mr. Brailsford's words, the economic record (the same may be said of the social) is "poor in creative daring." The Mutiny of 1857, with its lesson of the dangers of any seeming interference with religion, paralysed the administration. It cannot be said with complete confidence that these faults will not survive under a wholly Indian administration. Caste, and even untouchability, die very hard. But a true Indian Renaissance seems likely to end the timidity ; so long as the full vigour of the impulse given by a satisfied nationalism persists. Anyhow, there will be the immense gain of full responsibility settled firmly on the shoulders of those who should bear it.

This is a sincere and an admirable book ; but it suffers from certain defects. There is, for one, an incomplete understanding of the Muslim position and the Muslim case, and Mr. Brailsford appears to waver in his proposals for the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim difference. He says more than once that the Muslim League represents wealth, and primarily the landed gentry ; which I believe to be an error. There are rich Muslims, and there are some wealthy Muslim landowners in Oudh and Bengal. But Muslims generally are poorer than Hindus—usurers belong mostly to the latter group—and, since 1937 at all events, the League appears to have recruited adherents from all classes of Muslims. While associating the Muslim League generally with wealth, Mr. Brailsford thinks that Muslims (see page 173) can be won for Socialism rather more easily than Hindus. These and other misunderstandings vitiate Mr. Brailsford's thinking on the subject of the communal issue, and he underrates the reality of some recent grievances.

He thinks (p. 78) that communal constituencies thrust things of secular concern in the background ; at the same time he sees (quite correctly) that the quarrel is at bottom not religious but economic, with a tendency to develop into a struggle for political power. He condemns communal constituencies as a device for the division of India ; but he sees (as Congress has seen on more than one occasion in former negotiations) that they may be inevitable (p. 171).

Finally, he seems (again on p. 171) to be willing to strike a bargain by which Congress shall make a concession on the subject of Pakistan—a far more serious divider of Indian unity than separate constituencies—in return for a decision by the British Government to desist from protecting the Princes in the exercise of their autocracy.

This part of the proposals cannot have been completely thought out. Mr. Brailsford may, of course, think that Pakistan is so certain ultimately to split on the three rocks of landward defence, finance and industrialisation, that India might safely take the risk of it, as the lesser of the inevitable evils. But this is gambling with a vengeance.

If we ignore for the moment the suggestion for a bargain—Pakistan against the Princes—which may not have been very seriously put forward as a solution of the two problems, Mr. Brailsford's proposal under the head of the States seems to be that the British Government shall decline to support the Princes in their refusal to give "full civil and political rights" (which evidently means a complete democratic constitution). Not only the Princes themselves but large groups of their subjects are interested in the maintenance of the existing system. Mr. Brailsford doubtless thinks that—if the British Government would stand aside—the general flood of democratic feeling in India would make short work of any resistance to the will of the vast majority. But the case is less simple when dealing with the personal ambitions

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and all the tangle of immemorial disorder, set free from the restraining hand of organised power. Mr. Brailsford knows how difficult it is for democracy to get its way in Britain, and is not likely to ignore the obstacles in India, when it finds no favouring tradition or habit.

There is a better way: and that is a more gradual one. The Princes have something to gain by inclusion in a federation, and something to lose by exclusion from it. The federation should start without them; and admission should be the prize offered for the adoption of less antiquated institutions.

The general pattern of Indian thought, with its fundamental conception of caste, is not very favourable to democracy. But democracy was the obvious method of securing the aims of nationalism without recourse to an Indian autocracy of the type anciently familiar. India will start, of course, with a close adaptation of the British model; but as soon as British control shall be withdrawn, and the passion of nationalism be appeased by fulfilment, the normal tendency to a more authoritative system of government is likely to assert itself. It is impossible to forecast the precise form which such institutions may take under the pressure of the call for social and economic reform; but they are likely to favour more summary and drastic action than a Parliamentary system of the British type permits.

JOHN MAYNARD

THE LATE LAMENTABLE INCIDENT

London in Flames, London in Glory. Edited by ROBERT ARNOLD AUBIN. *Rutgers Univ. Press.*

This is a selection of political odes, addresses and broadsheets on the first Fire of London and the rebuilding that followed, written between 1666 and 1709 and put together by an American editor. Only two poems of importance are omitted: Dryden's lines in *Annus Mirabilis* and a broadside ballad, *London Mourning in Ashes*, which had already been edited. The result is a nicely bound volume of third-rate verse—for the Fire, it has been said, inspired more bad verse than it destroyed—but this is not to say that the collection is uninteresting. There is something to be said, as the editor remarks, for Southey's opinion that "Time does more for books than for wine, it gives worth to what originally was worthless." One reads these poems with the curiosity one gives to the inscriptions on monuments. And if the verse is bad, the subject is good; it is a great deal better for the earnest versifier than the usual neo-classical literary subject. One puts down the book regretting that our own "Late Lamentable Accident" occurred when the genial habit of topical rhetoric had died out. These jog-trot lines with their calls to repentance, their mercantile hyperbole, their municipal sentiment, their jubilant puns and those classical allusions which in bad poetry come in with the bouncing step and shoe-squeakings of the ham actor, have the fascination of a sale by auction. On the positive side, these poets achieve occasional lines of almost Wordsworthian concern and graciousness—

> Now (dearest City) let my pencil trace
> The scattered lines of thy disfigur'd Face . . .

—and a note of domestic tenderness which, like the note of cheerful domestic vulgarity, London has so often evoked. London has the power to move the fonder emotions and has occasionally expanded these to include the feeling of a meditative accumulated majesty which breaks out like a sunset after a glum afternoon. The feelings we have about London correspond to the feeling of middle age when we achieve the right to start talking of things we remember when tenderness begins to have value; when we begin to defend our errors and, within our hardening shell, to subside into a self which has shut the windows and has become comfortably unventilated at last.

London owes its perennial middle age to the masterly destructiveness of its citizens. If the Fire had not ruined the City we may be sure the civic sense of Londoners in the practical early eighteenth century would have done the job of the flames in time. This civic sense is not all Lord Mayor and planning; it has something in it of private love. The poems on the rebuilding of London in this book lapse like *Paradise Regained* after the dramas of *Paradise Lost*, but they do catch occasionally the nearest thing this civic sense has to a lyrical moment:

> Whiles building Noises by the pleased mind
> Are into all harmonious Notes combined. . . .

That is an accurate note on the orchestration of trowels, and a response to our taste for private sauntering. All except one of the reconstruction poems have the shiny piety to fact which we nowadays see in the documentary film, and indeed the war artists and the documentary films are doing for us what these poets of this book did. The exception is a high-seasoned satire on the foxy City Fathers of the brave new world. The important difference between 1666 and to-day is the absence now of religious reference, of the feeling of myth. The Puritan sense that London was visited for its sins gives a dramatic send-off to these poems. Unless Jehovah's Witnesses are writing topical verse on the quiet, there could be nothing like this for London's second "fatal Fall."

The advantage bad poets have is that they can specialise without shame—Simon Ford, for example, was a kind of fire laureate, and did the Northampton disaster, after he had finished with Pie Lane. They also collect metaphors like bric-à-brac. They are secondhand shops in which the Phoenix, Sodom and Gomorrah, Jerusalem, the Everlasting Flames and the Dragon of Revelation can be had in all shapes and sizes. You can choose from a dozen Phoenixes, and a score of Hells. The Dragon of Revelation has always been a winner in the half-world of near-religion and near-poetry and the startling discovery that the Dragon's "number" was 666 made 1666 a year of nightmare to the many readers of popular astrology.

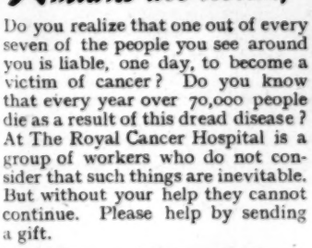
The Fire was a paradise for moralists and for the collectors of grotesque juxtaposition and melancholy fancy. New sacrifices are buried on the altars, the tomb itself is unlocked, the immortal stone which mocked at human dust is now dust itself and martyrs are doubly martyred. The bad poet does not fear the near-miss in his similes. He will see the waxen statue of Elizabeth smiling with one eye and dropping tears with the other, after an arrow-like glance has assured her that Whitehall is all right. He even makes something of the surrealist possibilities. Here goes St. Paul's—where so many merchants had sent their goods for sanctuary—

> Poor Paul the Aged has been sadly tost,
> Reform'd, then after Reformation lost;
> Plac'd in a Circle of Heaven's fiery wrath:
> The Saint was tortured when he broke his Faith!
> At the East-end a spacious sheet of Lead
> (Rent from the rest) his Altar canopied,
> And from its Coale below Strange fires did rise,
> And the whole Temple prov'd the sacrifice.
> Altars may others save, but cannot be
> (When Heaven forsakes 'em) their own Sanctuarie!
> Then was there doleful Musick in the Quire
> When the sweet organs breath was turn'd to fire.

Yes, the fire was a gift to the poet:

> What unwonted Fire
> Thus on a sudden doth his breast inspire.

It evoked the permanent professional conflagration in the poet's bosom, it filled the blazing eye of Phoebus, Jove, etc., with jealous concern and travelled faster than the Bright Traveller.



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NICHOLSON & WATSON

The strong spirit of mercantile piety which is plain in Pepys and Defoe and discernible in Evelyn is in the foreground of these poems, eking out the narratives which fall—not unhappily—between the everyday and heroic. One picks up some titbits of documentation. There is the rush of goods to St. Paul's. There is the picture of the poor coining money in rescuing the property of the rich and the scared bargaining among the flames. The light-footed poor have little to carry, the rich man is almost Biblical under the burden of his possessions. (Cheques and fire-insurance have since weakened such opportunities for parable.) Wine and ale are poured on the flames as well as water from the buckets hanging on the walls of churches. Occasionally one comes across a piece of real observation :

> The fire which we not only forward trace.
> Which Janus like presents a double face ;
> And doth not only turn before the wind,
> And backwards shoots its flames as far behind.

One must admire the general outburst and a writer will regret that this sort of rhodomontade in the form of righteous news reel, with its panting conceits, and its consequential local patriotism, has not been echoed in our time. Even the dates of the beginning of the first Fire and the Blitz correspond. The notes by Mr. Aubin to these poems are very rewarding.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE ELIZABETHAN BACKGROUND

The Elizabethan World Picture. By E. M. W. TILLYARD. *Chatto & Windus.* 6*s.*

Historians are specially interested in the controversies of the past, because of the light these throw upon what men believed. But in every society and period certain assumptions are unquestioned and excite no discussion. In the Reformation period, for instance, controversy might rage about the interpretation, say, of a text from an Epistle, but it was taken for granted that the words were written by St. Paul and were absolutely true. The history of European thought during the last four hundred years records the persistent decrease in assumptions, but presumably posterity will notice that we, too, take for granted a number of propositions that are based upon no evidence. Mr. Basil Willey in an outstanding book, *The Seventeenth Century Background*, brought to our attention some of the assumptions entertained during that period, and now, following this example, Dr. Tillyard has produced an interesting, though too short, study of the Elizabethan background. His book is based chiefly on the results of recent American research.

He is particularly concerned to show how much of the medieval *Weltanschauung* was preserved. Popular handbooks spread the theories of Copernicus, but the Elizabethans continued to regard the universe as geocentric. Praying to angels was impugned, but Protestants continued to accept the traditional hierarchy of creation. The stones were linked to God through the intervening classes of plants, beasts, men, and the various angelic orders ; each class, moreover, had its members arranged according to an accepted rank, the oyster, for instance, being the lowest of beasts, and the lion their king. Dr. Tillyard exposes with well-chosen quotations the intricacies of the class system thus imposed upon the whole of creation by medieval philosophers who had amalgamated material from the Scriptures, from Plato, and from the Neo-Platonists. The four elements, the four humours, the seven planets, the twelve signs of the zodiac were further components of this elaborate machinery. The great speech of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* is the best known expression of the importance thus attached to "degree." This conception of the universe burgeoned in societies arranged upon the feudal system, and it can readily be explained as a rationalisation projected by a governing class to justify and maintain its powers. But is not the impulse to obey at least as widespread as the will to power? Since the eighteenth-century, thinkers have increasingly neglected this possibility, though such an impulse is to be expected among gregarious animals, and has shown itself powerful, not least, alas, in our own time. One should also allow, I suggest, for a pattern-making impulse that is congenital to man. The medieval conception of "degree" may seem bizarre, but I think that it corresponds to some of the deepest impulses of humanity.

In Dr. Tillyard's opinion scholars underestimate the prevalence of medieval beliefs among the Elizabethans, and exaggerate the influence of the new humanism. About Hamlet's speech, "What a piece of work is man . . ." he writes :

> This has been taken as one of the great English versions of Renaissance humanism, an assertion of the dignity of man against the asceticisms of medieval misanthropy. Actually it is in the purest medieval tradition : Shakespeare's version of the orthodox encomia of what man, created in God's image, was like in his prelapsarian state and of what ideally he is still capable of becoming. It also shows Shakespeare placing man in the traditional cosmic setting between the angels and the beasts.

He quotes from *Measure for Measure* to prove (unconvincingly that Shakespeare accepted the doctrine of the Atonement. The puritans and the courtiers, he writes, were more united by a common theological bond than divided by ethical disagreements. Queen Elizabeth translated Boethius, and Raleigh was a theologian as well as a discoverer. The instances Dr. Tillyard gives are illuminating, yet he in turn seems to exaggerate. I am unqualified by expert knowledge, but the ethos of Shakespeare does not strike me as close to the ethos of Hooker. I should say indeed that there is surprisingly little of the Christian in Shakespeare's sentiments and moral judgments. According to Dr. Tillyard "all the violence of Elizabethan drama has nothing to do with a dissolution of moral standards : on the contrary, it can afford to indulge itself just because those standards were so powerful." But take one instance : though Hamlet accepts the "canon 'gainst self-slaughter," suicide in Shakespeare is more honoured than condemned, and surely this marks a signal dissolution of moral standards. Calderon was a contemporary dramatist who accepted wholeheartedly the theological scheme, and how different from his work are the Elizabethan plays. One of these is indeed specifically based on Christian doctrine, *Dr. Faustus*, but this was written by a man suspected of atheism.

The nature of belief is in any case more complicated, I think, than Dr. Tillyard here has given himself space to consider. When the painters of the Renaissance depicted the Madonna and Venus, there were differences presumably in the degree of their belief in the two personages, yet from the pictures alone an archaeologist would be unable to make any such deduction. Both subjects appear to be treated with equal conviction. Similarly though the "world picture" inherited by the Elizabethans from the Middle Ages was inconsistent with the "world picture" newly provided by the study of antiquity, the poets drew simultaneously upon both sources. Apart from the archaistic Spenser, they indeed made much fuller and more frequent use of classical than of Christian legend. It is to be hoped that Dr. Tillyard in a future work may employ his industry in a more penetrating analysis of the Elizabethan mind, remembering that human beings are wonderfully capable of entertaining mutually contradictory beliefs.

One fact emphasised in his book is that "thoughts" usually considered as the personal discoveries of Shakespeare or Raleigh or Spenser were in fact only contemporary commonplaces. This is important because some teachers of English literature still retain the Victorian habit of praising poets as "thinkers," though their "thoughts" are usually borrowed or confused.

On page 63 Dr. Tillyard should perhaps have explained that the "nobler kind of blood" carried in the arteries was thought to be invisible as air ; and on page 92 in the last sentence of the first quotation from Starkey, the word "heads" should be replaced by the word "arms."

RAYMOND MORTIMER

NO NATION IN ISLAM

Islam Today. Edited by A. J. ARBERRY and ROM LANDAU. *Faber and Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This is a timely anthology, if only because it may make some readers think about the peoples whose lands are being fought over, and in whose desires and hopes our rulers have so far displayed no apparent interest, if the exception be made of Mr. Eden's promise of liberty for the Syrians. The sixteen authors cover the main regions of Mohammedan habitation, on no very homogeneous principle, for some of them write political history, some sociology, and one or two religious studies. This is perhaps inevitable, as Islam is at once a faith, a moral code and a policy. What emerges from the whole is an impression of revival, modernisation, and especially of nationalism. The Mohammedan world is more closely knit than Christendom once was, and though it says "No nation in Islam," a collective nationalism is natural in adherents of a creed which, for all its tolerance, holds itself the True Faith, and of whom the vast majority are subject to the rule of Christians or of Infidels. The independence movements, mutually sympathetic, of to-day are the modern equivalent of the righteous resistance to the aggression of the Crusades. In this book, Miss Freya Stark on Iraq and Sir Percy Sykes on Afghanistan express the orthodox British view of political history, tempered by some sympathy for the aspirations of the people they describe. No such consideration enters the account of Algeria and Tunisia by M. Henry Davray, which is simply an exposition of the French imperial standpoint, and is even misleading, no doubt unintentionally, in conveying the impression that the Algerians enjoy democratic rights. In fact they are skilfully debarred from the suffrage by the provision that they must renounce Moslem legal status to obtain it, as of course no religious man can do. Mr. Rom Landau rushes to the other extreme in an outpouring of hero-worship of Ibn Saud of the Hejaz so unmitigated that that great man, if he reads it, will surely roar with laughter. The chapters on East and West Africa are scarcely less rosy. It is true that the period of Arab dominance in Zanzibar was far more civilised, and especially more artistic, than the squalid fortune-hunting of the Portuguese or the Germans and British; it is true, too, that Islam gives certain rights to slaves, and a better standing than they ever got from Christianity; but the ferocious background of the slave-raid lay behind the Zanzibari clove-pickers and the royal favourites of the Saharan states, just as much as it lay behind the loved Mammy of Virginian children. Neither of the Central African authorities mention slave-raiding; to them Islam is a civilisation which raises the negro out of his barbarity and makes a gentleman of him—the tropical equivalent of Eton. Dr. Taha Hussein and Sir Hassan Suhrawardy are interesting on education in Egypt and India. Sir Hassan even quotes with pride the university successes of Indian Moslem women. If the renaissance of Islamic learning is going to abolish the great derogation from Islamic democracy, the degraded status of women, it will certainly gather an enormous impetus. That derogation lends a certain irony to the fact that the most profound religious study in the book is Dr. Anne Lambton's admirable *Spiritual Influence of Islam in Persia.* The chapter on Palestine is a rare and creditable exercise in justice as between the Arabs and Jews, for which Sir Arthur Wachope will be thanked by neither. "Meleager" on Syria tries to establish a possible synthesis, whose elements should be Greek philosophy, the essentials of Christian culture, and the newly thought-out tenets of Islam, which he believes may evolve from the contacts of to-day. This is the most constructive chapter in an uncommonly mixed bunch.

FREDA WHITE

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.
POSTAGE on this issue is : Inland, 1½*d. ; Foreign,* 1… *Canada,* 1*d.*

Week-end Competitions

No. 692

Set by Fred Oyster

We offer the usual prizes for the best items—recipes or menus—of political cookery. Limit 150 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 17th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 689

Set by D. E.

Oddities in social customs, language, architecture, dress, etc. (such as the Triglyphs of Greek architecture, the Flash at the back of the collar of the Welch Fusiliers) for which there is no apparent reason can often be traced to some long forgotten necessity. Readers are asked to imagine such oddities—the more absurd the better—in the year 2043 as could be traced back to the conditions of life imposed by the present war. Prizes to the amount of Four Guineas are offered.

Report by D. E.

A difficult competition to judge. Here is a rather arbitrary selection from a vast proliferation of fancy. "It will be an actionable slander to call a man a 'house-painter' or a 'paper-hanger'" (Agag). "Word 'Beveridge' denoting indefinite postponement" (A. Elkan). "Why do grocers keep their oranges and eggs under the counter instead of on it?" (Stephen Gang). "The use of the word 'fire-watching' for husbands staying out all night" (Musquash). "The custom of carrying expensive, often jewelled, torches as part of evening dress" (H. R. Shaw). Good but less succinct suggestions came from Saltpetre, Phiz, Leslie Johnson, William Bliss, John Grant, P.B., and Joanna Birkett. I recommend L. E. J. for a first of two guineas, and Ignotus, E. V. Milner, Towanbucket, and Anthony Curtis for prizes of half-a-guinea each.

FROM "NOTES AND QUERIES," A.D 2043

Q.—Why is it considered bad manners not to linger on the doorstep of a house where you have dined?

A.—An example of a habit surviving when its purpose is forgotten. During the Second Great War the pause was necessary to accustom the eyes to the darkness of the "black-out."

Q.—Why are the bottom two inches of men's trousers made of a different cloth from that of which the main trousers are made?

A.—After the Second Great War there was such a rush to resume "turn-ups" that tailors had to tack such material as they could get onto existing trousers. Later, it became vulgar and "plutocratic" to have turn-ups and trousers of the same pattern.

Q.—Why do tobacconists' shops have "NO MATCHES" written on their doors?

A.—The origin of this trade-sign (*c.f.* the barber's pole) is obscure. Prof. Nowall suggests that matches, which were sold by tobacconists until their use went out *circa* 1950, being highly inflammable, the inscription may have been to comply with the requirements of the fire insurance companies.

Q.—Why does the B.B.C. telepathist begin the news by saying "and this is So-and-so projecting it?"

A.—Another relic of the Second Great War. When the voice was used for broadcasting, it was customary to identify the speaker for security reasons. Thought, of course, being unidentifiable, the custom has no practical purpose to-day.

Q.—Why is any popular movement known as "a regular beverage port?"

A.—Corruption of "Beveridge Report."

L. E. J.

Vestigial remains of the present war existing in the year 2043;

The term "commando" used to denote a chimney-sweep.

The phrase "Beveridge report," meaning a loud but harmless explosion.

The saying "It's a nice day in the straits."

The convention of a subterranean tool-shed in urban gardens.

Adhesive lace curtains.

Small sandbags labelled "Dog" placed at intervals along public thoroughfares.

E. V. MILNER

BLITZ.

Short for Blitzkrieg: lightning war. Came to be used, by a national transference, for the slowest form of warfare—a succession of attritional air-raids. Now applied to the whole of the present era, from 1914.

HOW DID THE "CADENZA POLITICA" ORIGINATE?

One hundred years ago a composer was expected to inculcate left-wing doctrine in his music. He may now choose his theme, provided the music breaks off after the first few bars and a short conventionalised cadenza, usually of Russian type, is introduced, to assure the listeners of his orthodoxy.

WHY CHRISTMAS EGGS?

At one time birds' eggs, especially hen's, were much eaten in England. Their scarcity and final disappearance in the war made them a symbol of peace and goodwill, and it became the custom to draw one or two underneath Christmas greetings. "Easter eggs," declared the Prime Minister of the day roundly, "are now redundant." IGNOTUS

(Letter to *Manchester Guardian*, April, 2043.)

THE SCISSORS MOVEMENT.

SIR,—I have noticed that some of the more elderly assistants in the State Provision Stores of Manchester have a habit of acknowledging one's order by snapping the thumb and forefinger once or twice at the empty air. Although I have often asked them why they do this, none of them has ever been able or willing to tell me. Can it be, I wonder, a sort of hereditary recollection of those lean days of a hundred years ago, when food was "rationed" and could be obtained only by presenting "coupons," which the shop assistants had to cut out of a book with scissors? The snapping movement exactly resembles the use of scissors.

Yours, etc.,

EMILY KAI SHEK TOWANBUCKET

(Our correspondent's explanation is ingenious but unlikely. We should imagine that the practice is just a form of what used to be called "doodling"—*i.e.*, a nervous movement by which some persons stimulate thought.—ED. "Guard.") TOWANBUCKET

(1) The painting of the chin with woad by male students of philosophy on August 12th each year. This is in commemoration of the birthday of Dr. C. E. M. Joad. Dr. Joad was a teacher of philosophy who acquired a large following during the Second World War. He is, of course, also famous for his historic feat of having an article in every newspaper on one single day.

(2) The stuffing of the index finger of each hand into the corresponding ear on hearing the words "piano concerto." This is the only surviving custom of the Society for the Severe Rationing of the Tchaikovsky B Flat Minor Piano Concerto. During the Musical Renaissance of the War this society was formed on the ten thousandth public performance of the concerto. ANTHONY CURTIS

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